



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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This publication has been produced with the assistance of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of «Right to Protection» and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UNHCR.

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint
Monitoring Report.
January – December 2019.

This report provides the results of the survey conducted at all five Entry-Exit Checkpoints (EECPs) with NGCA in 2019. The survey is a part of the monitoring of violations of rights of the conflict-affected population within the framework of the project «Advocacy, Protection and Legal Assistance to the Internally Displaced Population of Ukraine» implemented by CF «Right to protection» in partnership with and with financial support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)¹. The objective of the survey is to explore the motivations and concerns of the civilians travelling between the non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) and the government-controlled areas (GCA), as well as the conditions and risks associated with crossing the contact line through EECPs. More statistical data are available on the Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring Online Dashboard – <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/resources/eecp-monitoring-2019>.



¹ The survey has been conducted regularly since June 2017.

METHODOLOGY



This report is based on a survey of civilians crossing the contact line at the five EECPs. It should be noted that the survey results should not be directly extrapolated to the entire population travelling through the checkpoints, but helps to identify needs, gaps, and trends while providing an evidentiary basis for advocacy efforts. The data collection methodology was the same at all EECPs and was collected during regular visits to each of the five EECPs on a weekly basis.

The survey was conducted anonymously and with the informed consent of the respondents. All persons interviewed for the survey were informed about its objective. The survey was conducted in the form of personal interviews with people aged 18 and above. R2P monitors surveyed pedestrians queuing at the EECPs waiting to cross the contact line, the survey was not conducted in the vehicle queue and on weekends. The R2P monitors approached every fourth person in line with a request to complete the survey. If a person refused to participate, R2P monitors proceeded to survey the next fourth person in line. People travelling both to and from GCA took part in the survey. At no time did the R2P monitors cross the zero checkpoints into NGCA. The overall share of respondents travelling in both directions was almost even: 52% of interviews were conducted with people heading to NGCA, 48% of respondents were going to GCA. The share of people surveyed in GCA direction at Stanytsia Luhanska that was significantly smaller in the first half of 2019 due to the limited access to that side of the EECP, has levelled out in the second half as it became more accessible.



HIGHLIGHTS

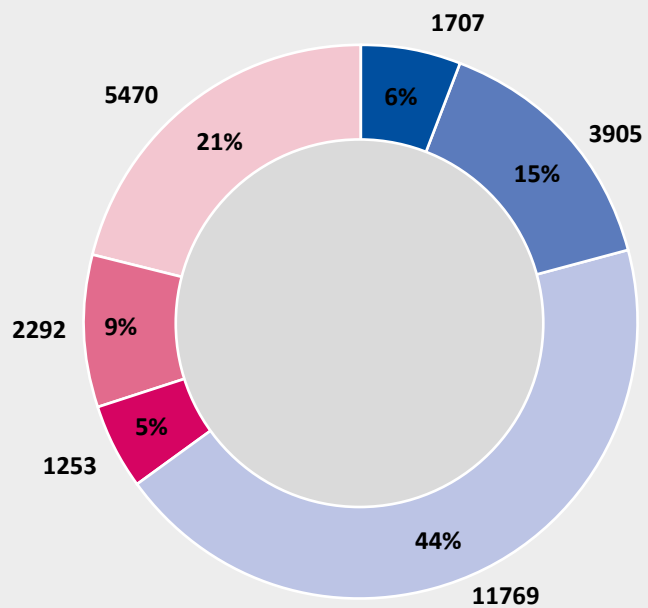
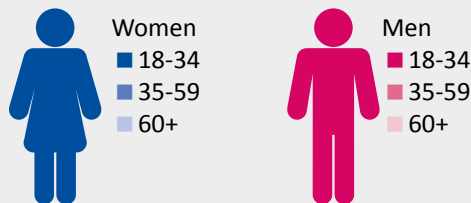
- In comparison with 2018, the share of respondents who did not raise any concerns related to the crossing process increased at all EECs except Novotroitske. The improvement may be related to the reconstruction of EECs, which sufficiently improved the waiting conditions: installation of waiting terminals, passport control booths, toilets, and sheds.
- Conditions at Stanytsia Luhanska EEC were deplorable in the first half of 2019. In the summer, over 80 people per day were losing consciousness due to the high outside temperature and the lack of sheds. Since August, conditions at Stanytsia Luhanska were significantly improved by the free transportation (the buses provided by Luhansk Oblast Administration and the electric vehicles operated by NGO Proliska on the EEC thanks to funding and partnership with UNHCR). By the end of the year, Luhansk Oblast administration repaired the road at this EEC thus alleviating most concerns.
- 1,363 respondents (5%) mentioned cases of not being able to cross the contact line in the six months prior to their interview. The vast majority 1,086 (3,98%) of these cases were caused by the lack of permits in the SBGS database.
- The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution №815 came into force on 28 November with a significant number of amendments included. Although some of the amendments facilitated the crossing procedure for children under the age of 14, the other ones complicated it for those over the age of 14 who did not obtain a passport yet. Many cases of civilians with such children being denied access to GCA were observed since then. In December a temporary solution for children between the ages of 14 to 16 was found.
- Since 11 December, SBGS servicemen do not allow to cross the contact line to NGCA people with debts for public utilities, land lease, alimonies, bank loans etc.. Previously, they could cross due to a special SBGS internal regulation that was abolished on 11 December. It created the situation when NGCA residents were unable to return to their homes. By the end of the year the issue remained unsolved.
- 38 fatalities reportedly took place at EECs in 2019, including 16 deaths on NGCA side (information from social media and OSCE reports) for which the data cannot be confirmed. The preliminary causes of death in most cases in GCA were related to heart diseases.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

In twelve months of 2019 R2P monitors surveyed **26,396** civilians² crossing the contact line. Same as in previous years, the results of the survey analysis demonstrated that the number of women among respondents (17,381 – 66%) is almost two times higher than men (9,015 – 34%).

The gender disaggregation was rather consistent throughout the year, fluctuating within a range of 6%. The share of men slightly increased in the second half of 2019 (to 37% at the peak). At this period of time, the number of men traveling to solve issues with documents increased as well.

AGE AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS



Interestingly, the share of men was lower at Marinka EECP (29%) than at other four checkpoints (35% average). Throughout the year, there were several complaints about prejudice of servicemen towards young men at Marinka EECP, which could be one of the reasons of such trend.

The share of respondents traveling to GCA and NGCA was approximately equal among both men and women.

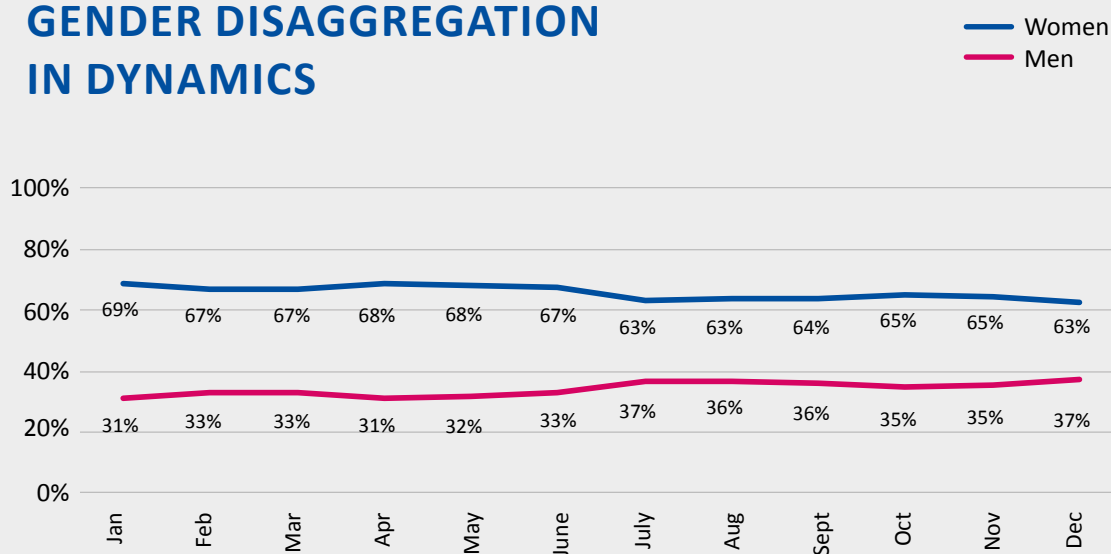
The share of respondents over 60 years old was higher (by 8%) among women. It correlates with the average age of the population which is higher among women³. The reasons for crossing among men and women in that age category were mostly the same.

² One person could have been surveyed more than once during the year.

³ The State Statistics Service of Ukraine "Disaggregation of permanent population by gender," 2019 – <https://cutt.ly/PrRRAK8>

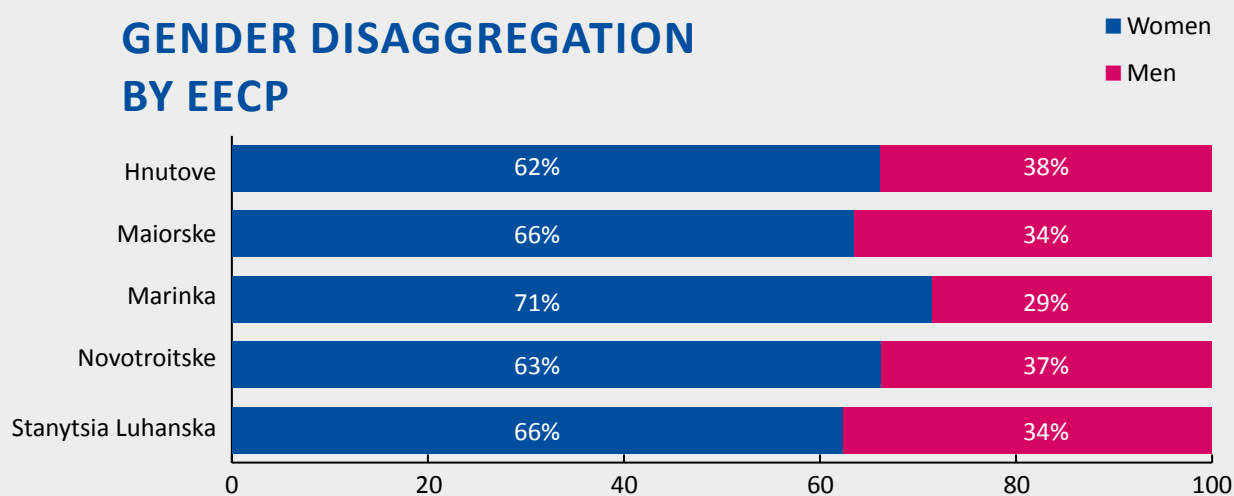
The age disaggregation remained without changes as well in comparison to the previous years. Just as the disaggregation by gender it remains rather stable with older people representing the predominant majority of interviewees despite some fluctuations within a range of 12%. However, R2P monitors did not survey people in the line for vehicles. It is possible that people of younger age and people with children prefer to travel by car. Younger people might also be more likely to travel on weekends rather than on working days. The low number of younger respondents demonstrates that they have fewer reasons to cross the contact line.

GENDER DISAGGREGATION IN DYNAMICS



Some fluctuations in the demographics were caused by enrolment and examination periods, and holiday seasons, when younger people were more likely to cross the contact line. An increase in the share of respondents of younger age in October and November was most likely caused by the adoption of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution №815⁴.

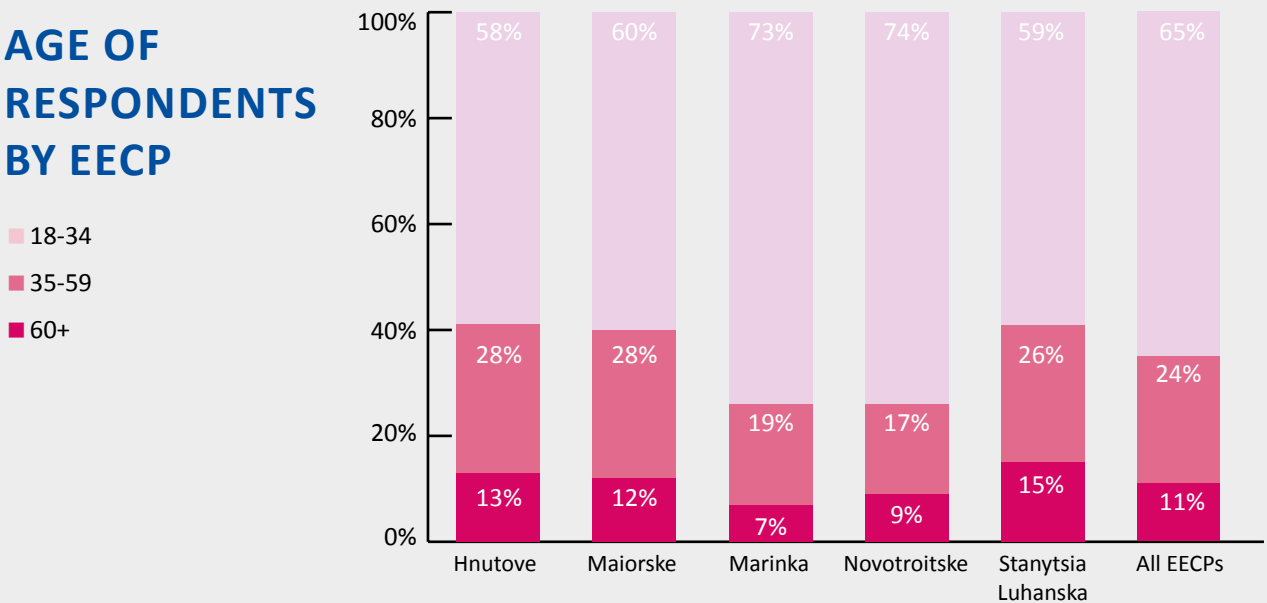
GENDER DISAGGREGATION BY EECF



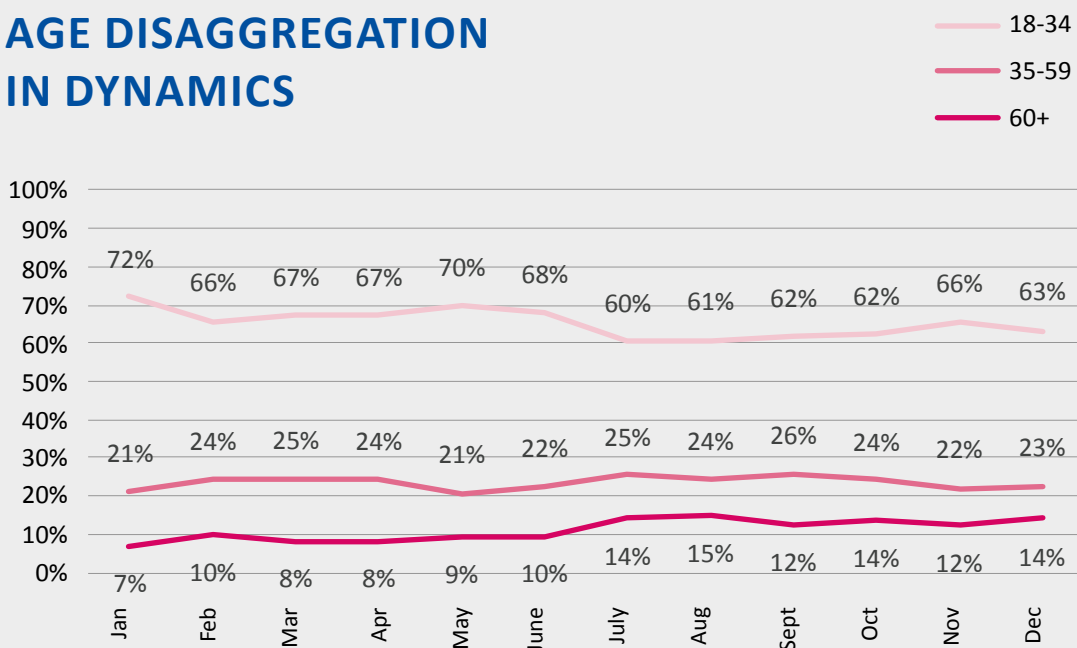
⁴ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution №815 - <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/815-2019-%D0%BF>

Interestingly, even though the demographic profile was similar at all EECPs, the share of respondents of older age was higher at Novotroitske and Marinka EECPs (74% and 73% respectively in comparison to 59% average on the other three). This difference might be explained by these EECPs closer location to the big cities of Donetsk Oblast NGCA and, consequently, lower transportation expenses. At the same time, Hnutove and Maiorske EECPs are closer to the larger cities of Donetsk Oblast GCA (such as Mariupol, Kostyantynivka, Bakhmut, etc.) with more services available for people of younger age.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS BY EECP

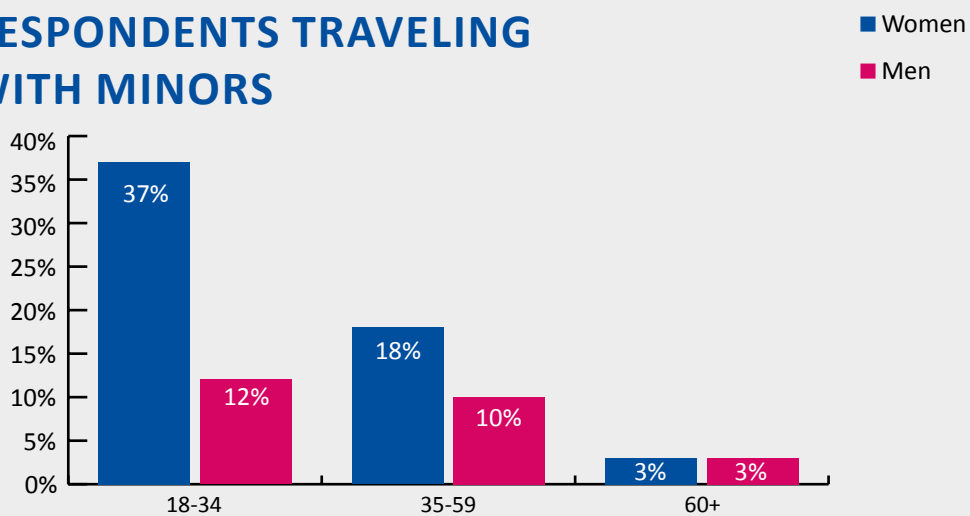


AGE DISAGGREGATION IN DYNAMICS



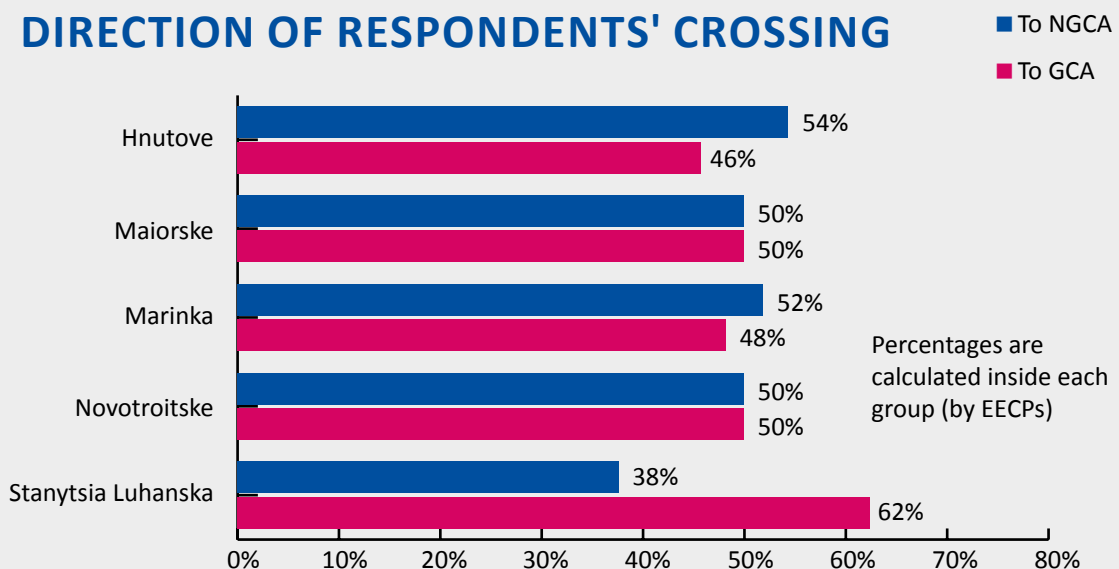
Over 8% of respondents were accompanying minors through the contact line. Such share started to increase in summer with the beginning of the vacation season and peaked in August. However, it remained quite high in comparison to the previous years, mostly due to the legislative changes that were adopted in the end of November (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution №815 in particular). The Resolution imposed strict requirements to the documents necessary for children to cross the contact line. Thus, the number of those traveling to obtain such documents among respondents with children increased from 12% in September to 46% in October. Women and respondents of younger age were more likely to travel with children. The number of respondents who were accompanying minors at Maiorske (11%) and Marinka (10%) EECPs was slightly higher than at the other three (7% average).

RESPONDENTS TRAVELING WITH MINORS



The overall share of respondents travelling in both directions was almost even: 52% of interviews were conducted with people heading to NGCA, 48% of respondents were going to GCA. The share of people surveyed in GCA direction at Stanytsia Luhanska, that was significantly smaller in the first half of 2019 due to the limited access to that side of the EECp, has levelled out in the second half as it became more accessible.

DIRECTION OF RESPONDENTS' CROSSING

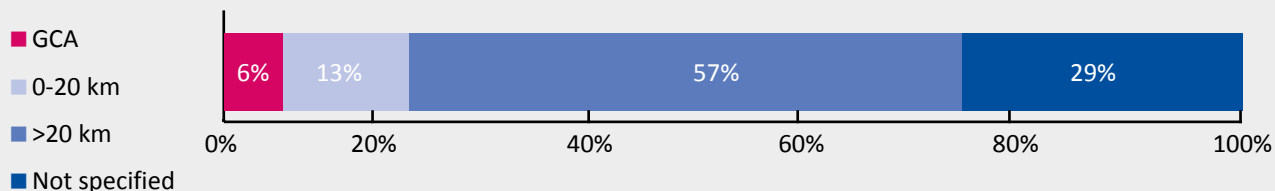


RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT, AND RETURNS

RESIDENCE

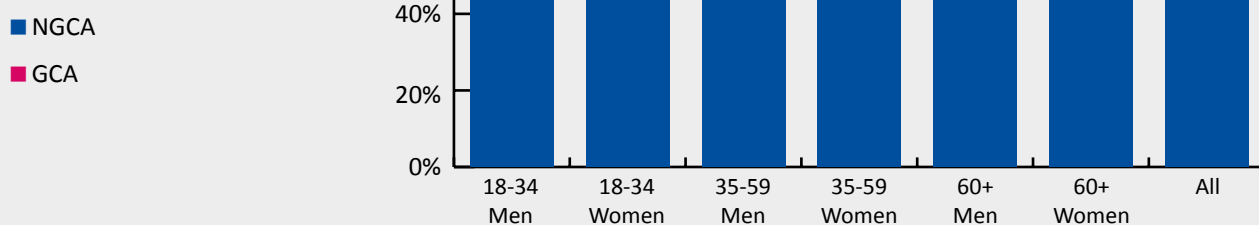
The majority of all respondents (94%) resided in NGCA at the time of the survey. The share remained stable throughout the year with minor fluctuations within a range of 3%. Most of NGCA residents stated that they live more than 20 kilometres from the contact line. It is noteworthy that there was a considerable difference in the reasons for crossing depending on how far from the contact line resides the respondent. The share of respondents who reside within the 20 kilometres distance to the contact line is the lowest among those surveyed at Hnutove (5%) and Stanytsia Luhanska.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE



It is important to remember that GCA residents have fewer reasons to visit NGCA, while people who reside in NGCA often need services that are unavailable or limited there. According to the SBGS data on the number of crossings, the flow of people crossing the contact line is lower on days when governmental entities and banks are closed (weekends, holidays, etc.).

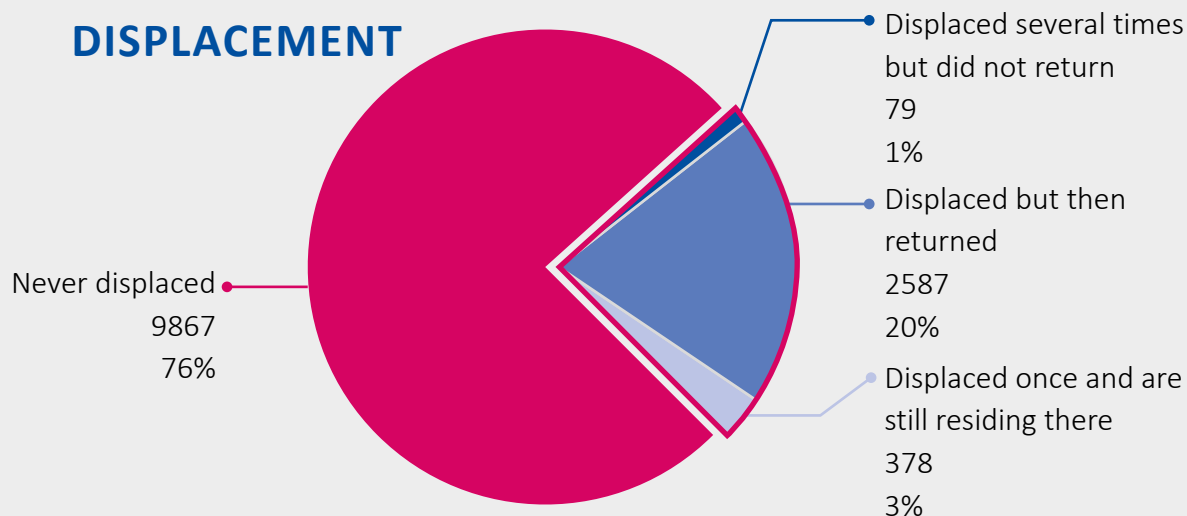
AGE OF RESPONDENTS BY PLACE OF RESIDENTS



The share of NGCA residents was higher among respondents over 60 years old: 98% in comparison to 85% of those in the age 18-59. It was also higher among respondents who were traveling with children than among those who were not (94% compared to 88%). The analysis of the places of residence prior to the conflict demonstrated similar trends: the share of GCA residents was higher among respondents of 18-59 years old (7% compared to 1%) and those accompanying minors (6% to 3%). The disaggregations were relatively consistent throughout the reporting period.

DISPLACEMENT & RETURN

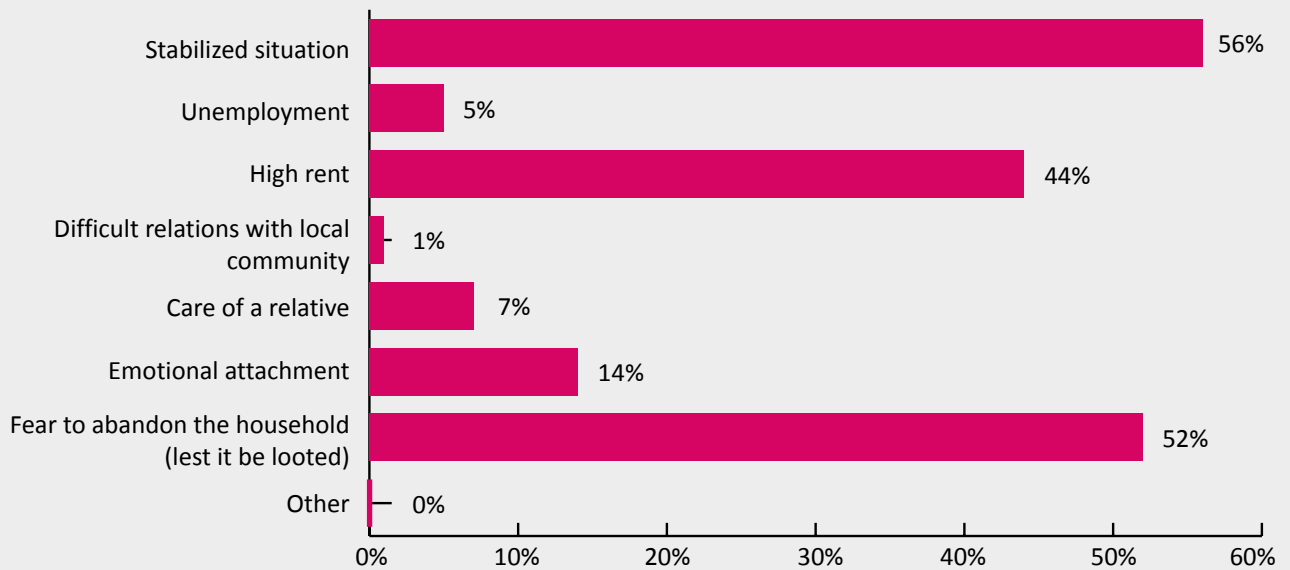
80% of all interviewees (without significant difference in age and gender) indicated that they have never moved due to the conflict, confirming the assumption that the number of IDPs and returnees was quite low among people crossing the contact line. 60% of the respondents who reside in GCA have been displaced due to the conflict at least once. Most of them (75%) were displaced only once and are still residing there. At the same time, 40% of the current GCA residents travelling across the contact line have never been displaced. The most common reason for crossing the contact line among such respondents was visiting their relatives (46%).



The highest share (32%) of respondents who were displaced at least once was at Stanytsia Luhanska EEC. At the same time, 87% of respondents at this EEC who were displaced, returned to their previous place of residence.

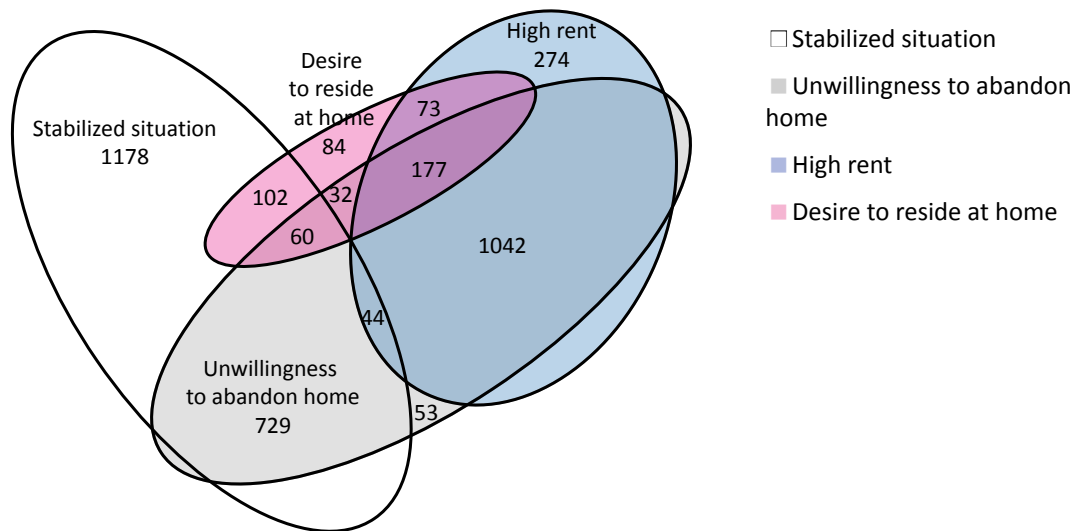
The most common reasons claimed that their decision to return was voluntary. Only 12% of the respondents claimed to return under the pressure of circumstances. 32% stated that their decision was made both voluntarily and due to the pressure of circumstances. Among those who returned involuntarily, the most common reasons were high rent (89%) and the fear to abandon the household lest it be looted (79%).

REASONS FOR RETURN



People could indicate several reasons for returning:

Overlap of TOP-4 reasons to return home | n=4,184



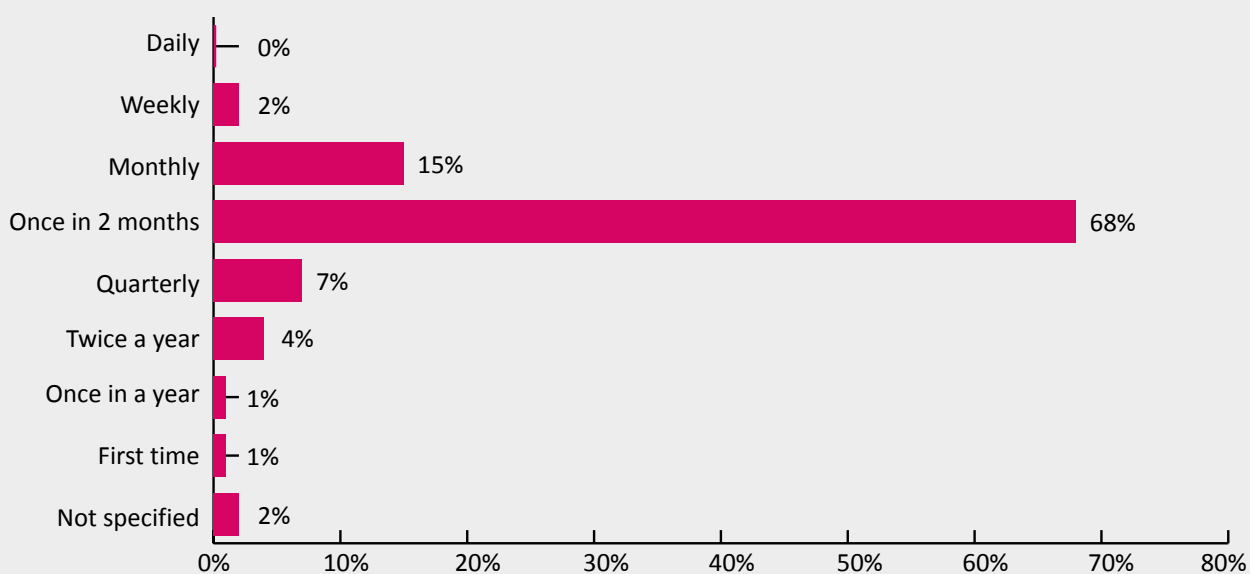
It is noteworthy that the share of those who were ever displaced was higher (23%) among the respondents who reside further than 20 kilometres from the contact line than among those who live closer (13%), which might be explained by residents of larger localities having more opportunities to relocate. Older respondents were also more likely to return to the previous place of residence. 94% of respondents over 60 years old who were displaced at least once have already returned, while 47% of respondents aged 18-59 who were displaced are still residing there. No difference was identified between men and women.

Although the majority of respondents who were displaced at least once already returned to their previous place of residence, such share should not be extrapolated to all internally displaced persons or NGCA residents who do not travel across the contact line at all or who do not do so through official EECs. It is also unknown what were the localities respondents were displaced to.

FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF CROSSING

The vast majority of respondents (68%) are crossing the contact line every two months. This is especially relevant to the pensioners (90% of older people travel bimonthly) as they mostly try to fit in the 60-day limit of being away from GCA. Younger respondents who do not have to meet such conditions mostly plan their trips just based on their schedules and are not tied to any particular imposed frequency.

FREQUENCY OF CROSSING



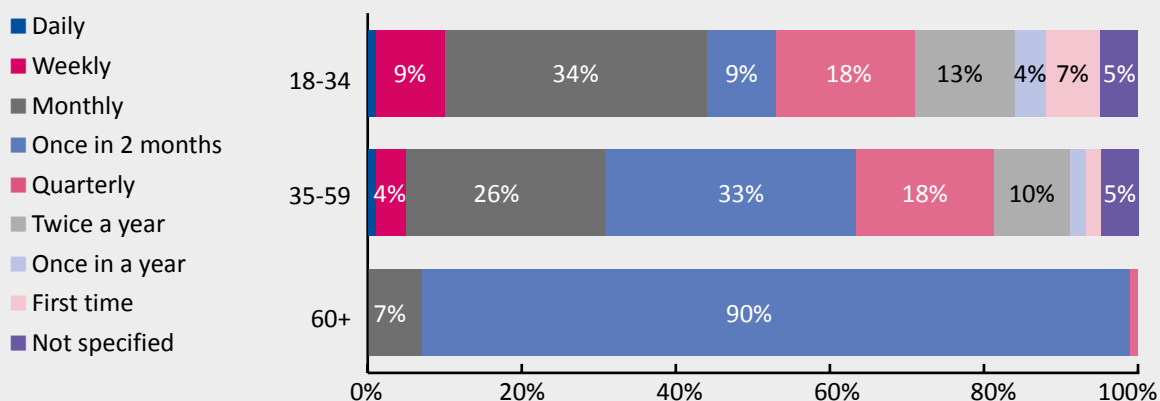
The frequency of crossing also varied depending on the EEC. Thus, the share of respondents who are crossing the contact line on a monthly basis was higher at Stanytsia Luhanska EEC (36% in comparison to 8% average at other EECs). The most common reasons for crossing among such respondents were visiting relatives (48%), solving issues with documents (30%) and solving issues related to pensions or social payments (26%).

As people were surveyed while they were in a process of crossing the contact line, the questions related to duration refer to the previous crossing. 82% of all respondents stated that they had previously crossed the contact line in 2019. It is noteworthy that the crossing process was showing the tendency to acceleration from March to June. In early June, the number of vehicles allowed to cross the contact line was limited to 6 cars per hour in NGCA (3 cars from the main line and 3 from the expedited line), increasing the

waiting time while reducing lines on the GCA side. A similar tendency of acceleration was observed by the end of the year, mostly – at Stanytsia Luhanska after the reconstruction of the road and the damaged bridge, conducted by the Luhansk Oblast administration.

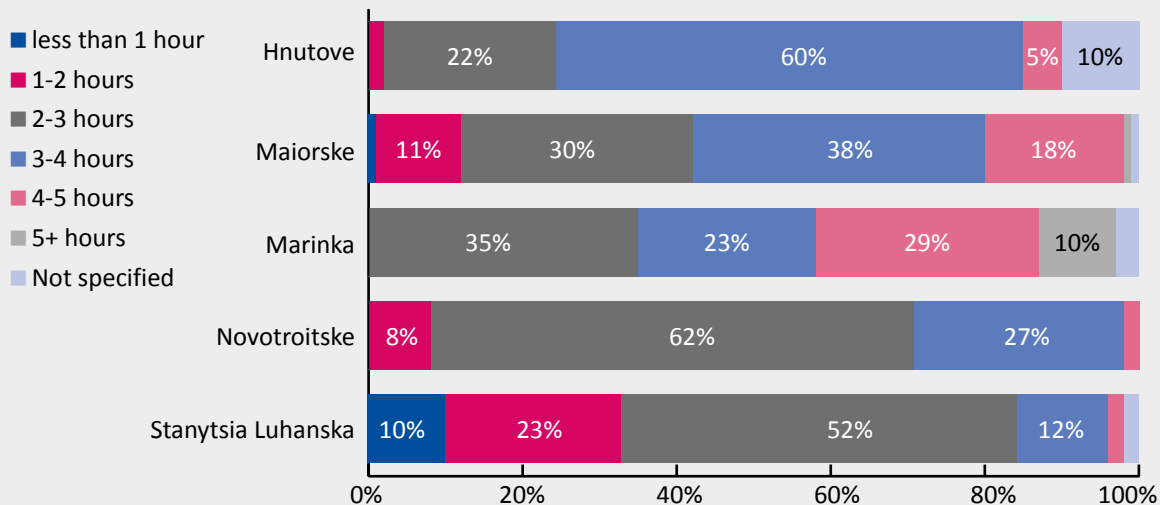
The reconstruction significantly improved the situation at this EECP, alleviating most of the concerns respondents had about crossing procedure.

FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE BY AGE



Another positive factor that helped shorten the duration of the crossing of the contact line was Luhansk Oblast Administration providing two buses and two electric cars operated by UNHCR and it's NGO partner Proliska to transport people between the bridge and Stanytsia Luhanska EECP.

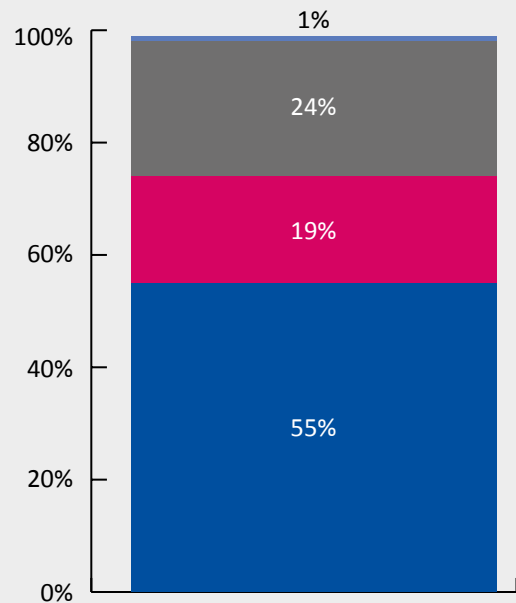
DURATION OF CROSSING BY EECP



There was no significant difference in duration of crossing by the gender of the respondents at all EECPs. However, respondents over 60 years old seemed to be spending more time on crossing the contact line than respondents of younger age, especially at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP where older people had walk the long way on foot. The gap narrowed after the free vehicles were provided for transportation between the bridge and the EECP itself. The reconstruction of the road and the bridge also had a positive impact on the situation.

SIDE OF CHECKPOINT WITH LONGER DURATION OF CROSSING

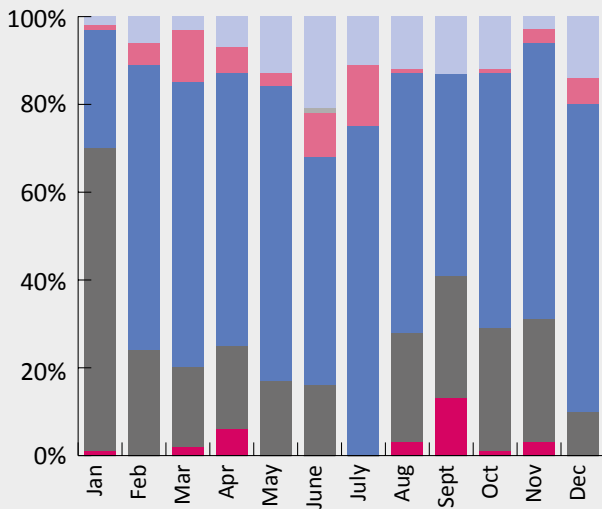
- NGCA side
- GCA side
- Approximately the same
- Not specified



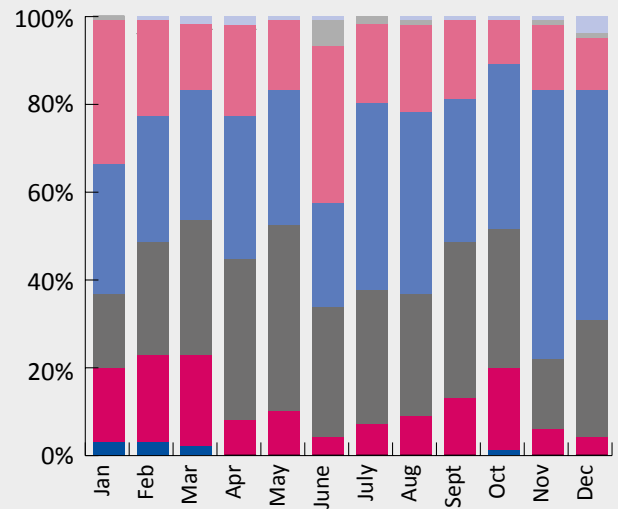
The duration of crossing significantly varied depending on the EECP, the side of it and the month of the crossing. 55% of respondents who answered the question about their previous crossing experience stated that it took longer to pass checkpoints in NGCA. 19% said they spent more time on GCA checkpoints and 24% stated it was approximately the same. The share of respondents who stated they spent more time at GCA checkpoints was consistently insignificant at Maiorske, Novotroitske and Hnutove EECPs, ranging from 0% to 2%. Such share at Marinka EECP was relatively low throughout the year as well, however it increased sharply in May (to 43%) and in July (to 45%). In comparison, the average share for the other ten months was 12%. According to the monitoring observations, these changes were caused by police staff and SBGS servicemen conducting more thorough inspections of civilians in May and a significant increase in the number of crossings in July. The share of respondents claiming that they spent more time in GCA than in NGCA at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP was consistently much higher as the control procedures in GCA are more complicated.

DURATION OF CROSSING IN DYNAMICS

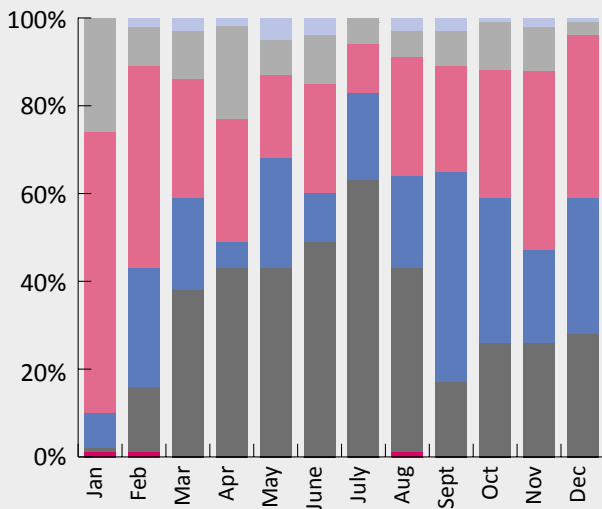
Hnutove



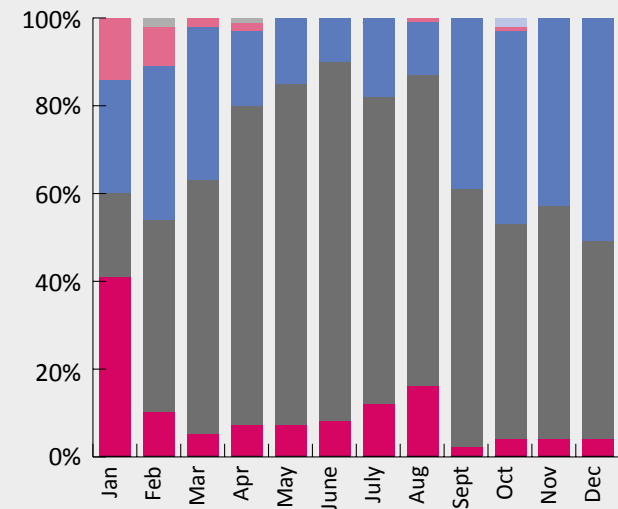
Maiorske



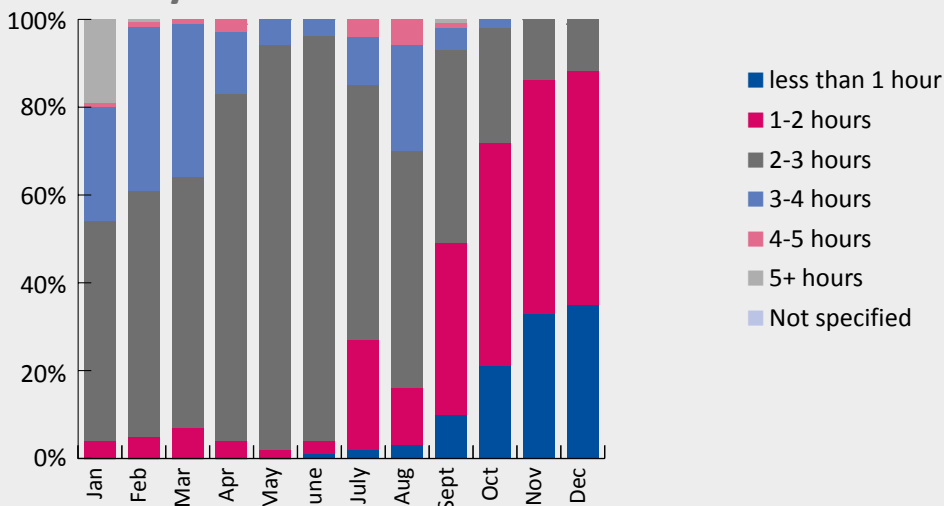
Marinka



Novotroitske



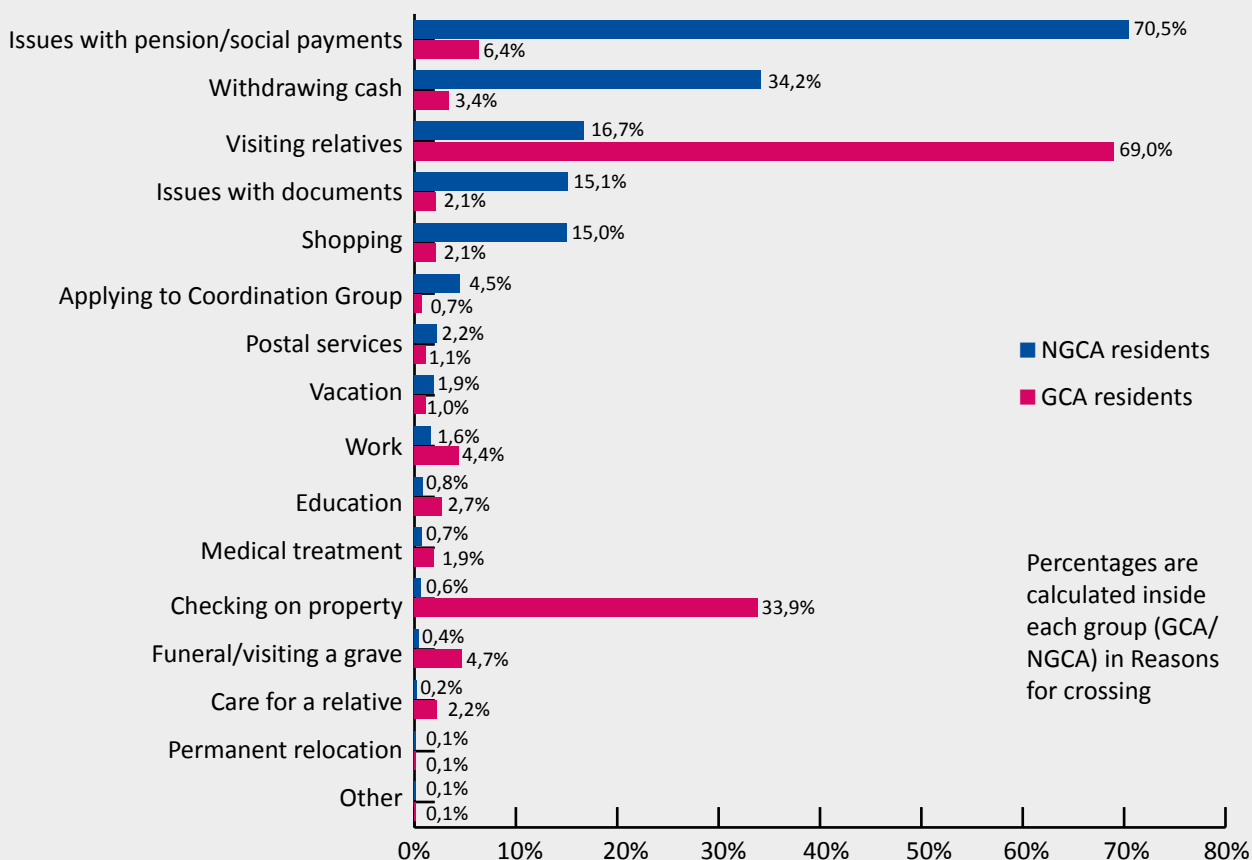
Stanytsia Luhanska



REASONS FOR CROSSING⁵

The disaggregation of reasons for crossing was relatively consistent throughout the year. Same as in previous years of conducting the survey, the reasons differ substantially for GCA and NGCA residents.

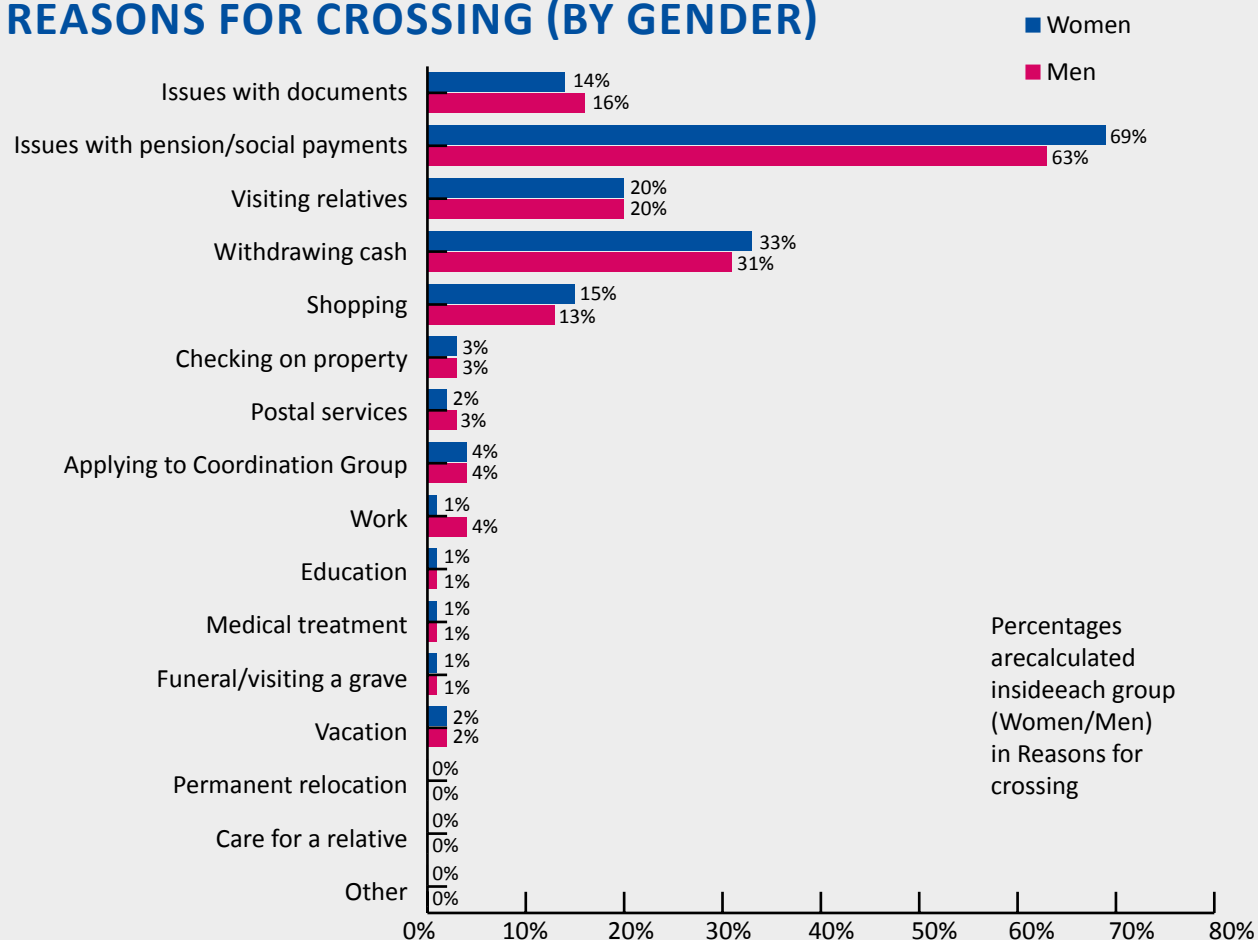
REASONS FOR CROSSING (BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE)



Solving issues with pensions or social payments remained the most common reason for crossing the contact line among NGCA residents. It was also more common among elderly people: 90% of respondents over 60 years old mentioned it among their reasons while the share among respondents aged 18-34 was only 8%. These issues mostly included avoiding payment suspension due to the 60-day limit of not being in GCA (88%) and passing physical identification (77%). According to the monitoring observations, pensioners who reside in NGCA tend to make short trips (one or a few days) to solve their issues and return. People aged 18-59 were more likely to travel for visiting their relatives (34% in comparison to 14% of elderly respondents) and solving issues with documents (31% to 6%). The reasons were also somewhat different depending on the EECP. Less people were travelling due to the issues related to pensions and social payments through Hnutove (63%), Maiorske (52%) and Stanytsia Luhanska (54%) than through Novotroitske (79%) and Marinka (83%), which correlates with the higher number of older people among respondents at these two EECPs. At the same time, respondents at Stanytsia Luhanska (30%) and Maiorske (29%) EECPs were approximately two times more likely to visit their relatives.

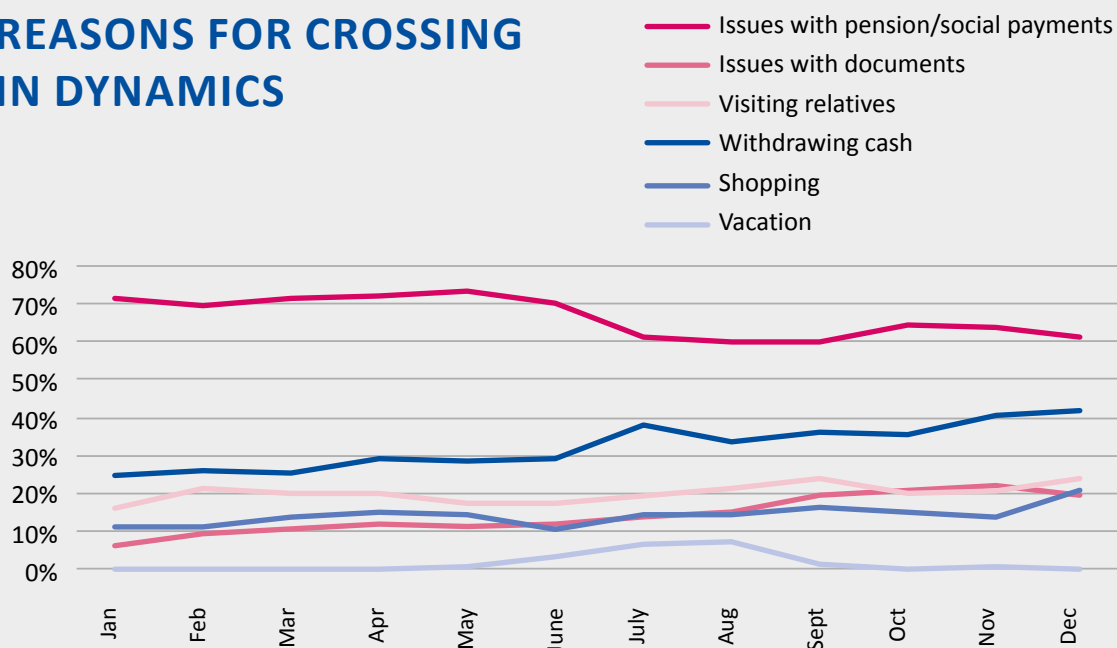
⁵ Respondents could indicate several reasons for crossing

REASONS FOR CROSSING (BY GENDER)

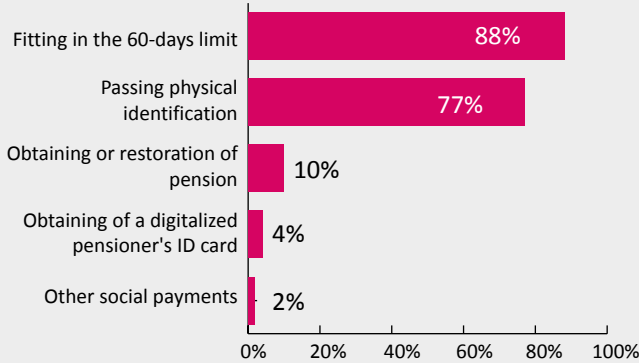


Respondents who live closer to contact line were much more likely to travel to withdraw cash (50% compared to 31%) and to do shopping (25% to 12%). This might be related to the limited availability of products in the localities in the 20-kilometres zone as most of the larger cities are located further away from the contact line.

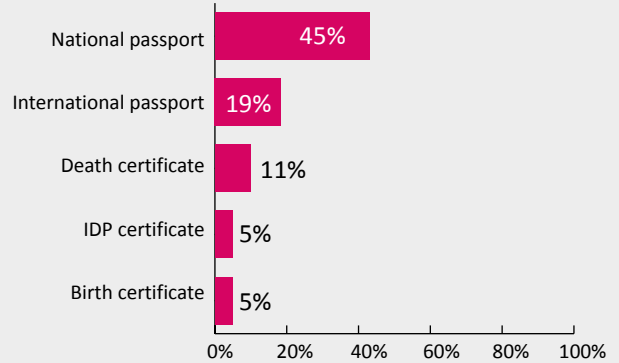
REASONS FOR CROSSING IN DYNAMICS



ISSUES WITH PENSIONS OR SOCIAL PAYMENTS

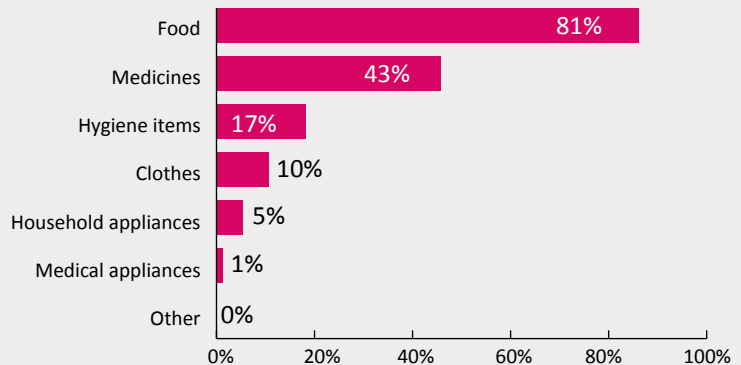


ISSUES WITH DOCUMENTS



Out of all people who had issues with documents, 45% indicated issues related to passport (6% of all respondents – 1,691 individuals). Among other documents respondents mentioned obtaining death (423 individuals – 2%), birth (178 – 1%) and IDP certificates (187 – 1%).

THE COMMONLY PURCHASED GOODS

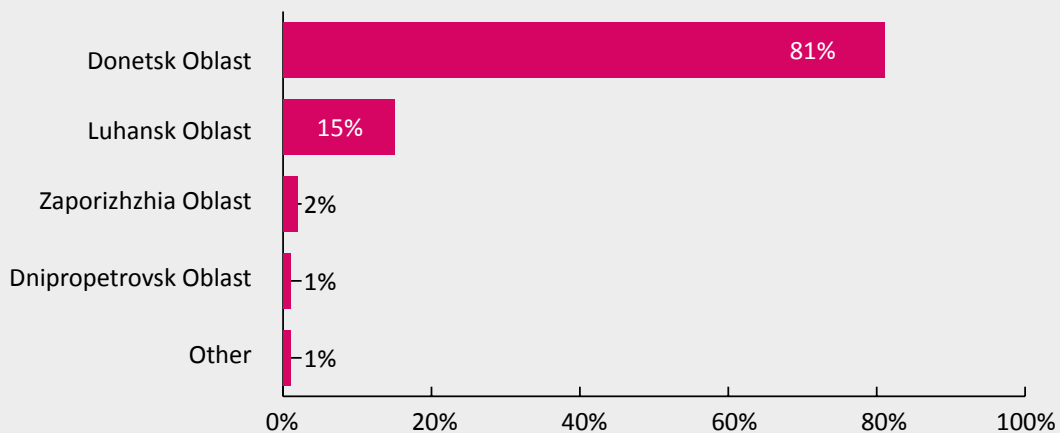


14% of all respondents (3,753 individuals) indicated shopping as one of their reasons for crossing. Shopping became a more common reason for crossing in December, increasing from 14% to 20%, as people were purchasing goods for the holidays. 99% of them were NGCA residents. There was no significant difference by gender in terms of what goods respondents were buying. At the same time, there was some difference by age: respondents over 60 years old were buying food more often (13% compared to 8% of respondents aged 18-34) while younger respondents and people who were traveling with children were more likely to purchase hygiene items (6% to 1%). According to the information from respondents, children hygiene products are more expensive in NGCA. Overall, the most common purchases included food (indicated by 11% of all respondents – 1,407 individuals) and medicines (5%). Food was more commonly mentioned by respondents at Marinka EEC (24% compared to 8% average at other four EECs), which is supposedly related to the fact that there is no ATM at this EEC and people who are traveling to withdraw cash have to visit the localities nearby where they can also buy food items.

DESTINATION OF THE TRIP

As NGCA residents often travel to solve issues related to state, legal or bank services, it is important to understand the demand on the infrastructure of the localities in GCA. 83% of all NGCA residents (10,601 individuals) agreed to answer the question about their destination point. The majority of such respondents (81%) were visiting localities in Donetsk Oblast, giving preference to the bigger cities located closer to the EECP. Interestingly, the share of respondents over 60 years old was much higher among those who were traveling to localities in Donetsk Oblast (72% of them were over 60 years old compared to 39% average among respondents traveling to other Oblasts). Conversely, people with children were traveling to Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast (8% in average) less often than to Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and other Oblasts (20%). It is important to note that destination point of some respondents were EECPs themselves to obtain services available there. It is also possible that some respondents named random localities if they did not feel secure enough to share such information.

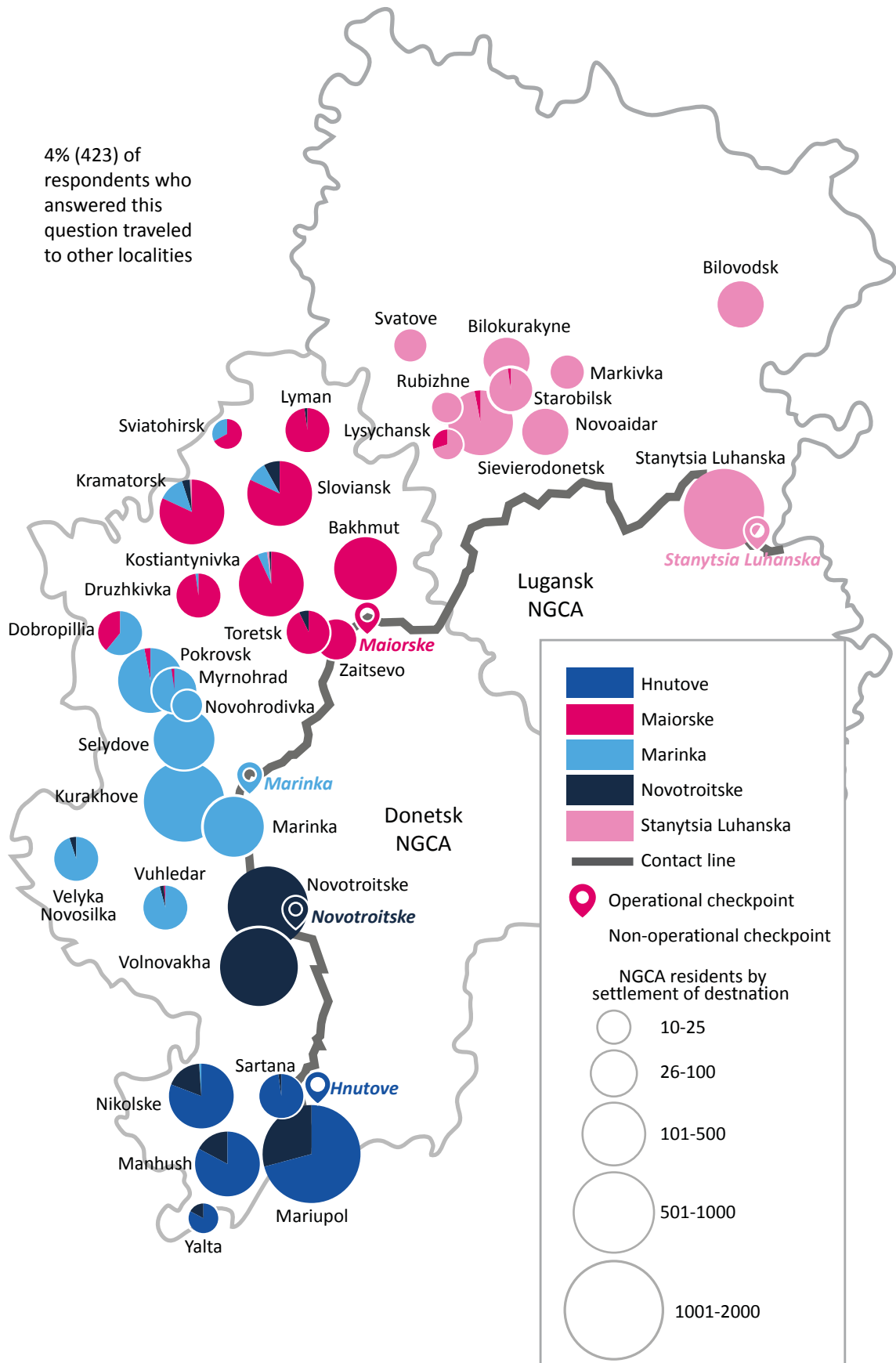
OBLAST OF DESTINATION



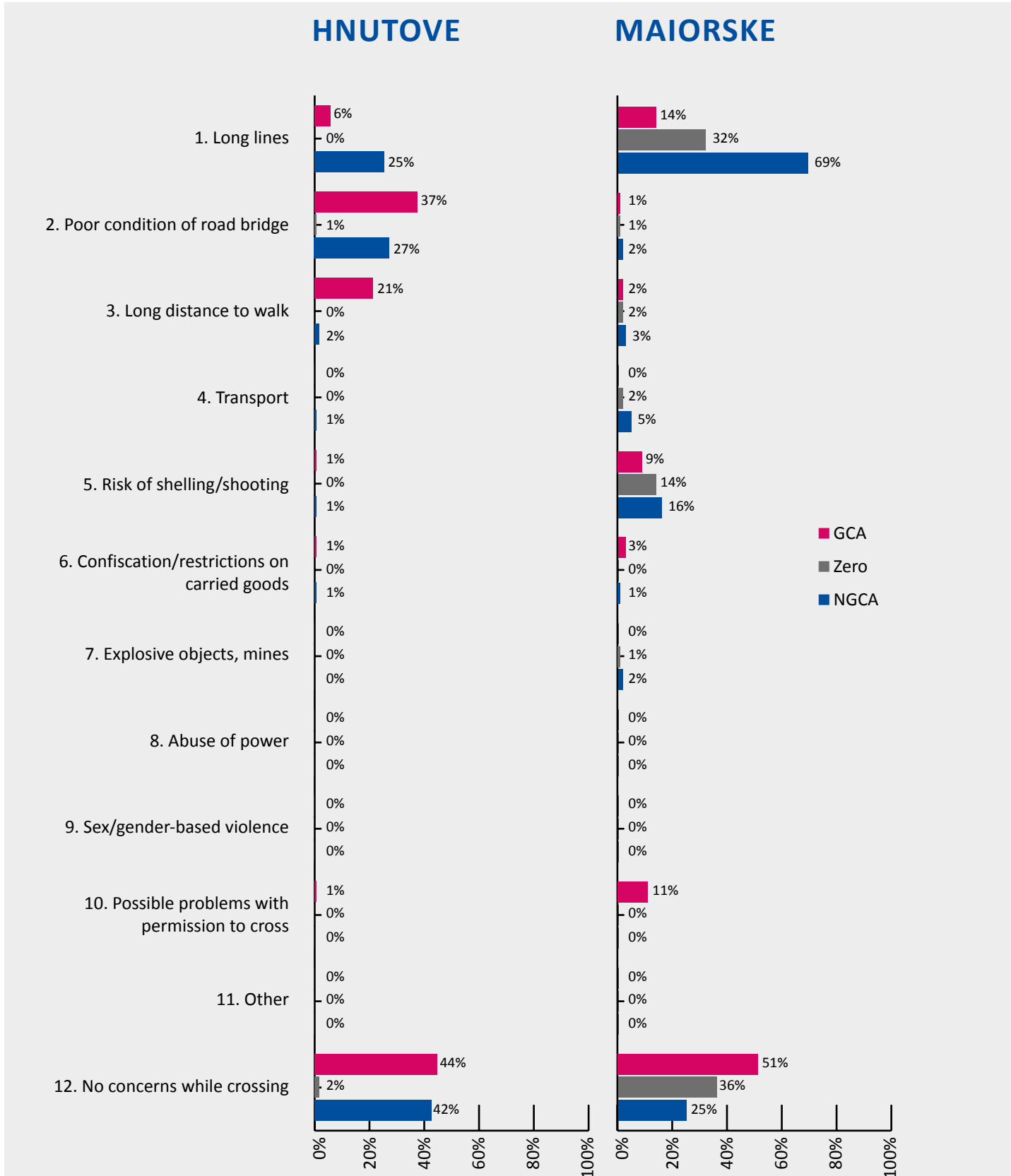
The most common destination point for respondents surveyed at Hnutove EECP who answered this question was Mariupol (72%- 1,417 individuals). Respondents at Maiorske EECP were mostly travelling to Bakhmut (51%- 900 individuals). Respondents surveyed at Marinka EECP were almost equally often travelling to Kurakhove (38%- 966 individuals) and Pokrovsk (29%- 733). The urban village of Novotroitske itself was the most common destination point among those surveyed at Novotroitske EECP (51%- 1,340). They also opted for Mariupol (22%- 575) and Volnovakha (22%- 585) quite often. Respondents at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP were mostly travelling to Stanytsia Luhanska (58% - 906 individuals).

THE MOST COMMON DESTINATION POINT FOR NGCA RESPONDENTS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019

4% (423) of respondents who answered this question traveled to other localities

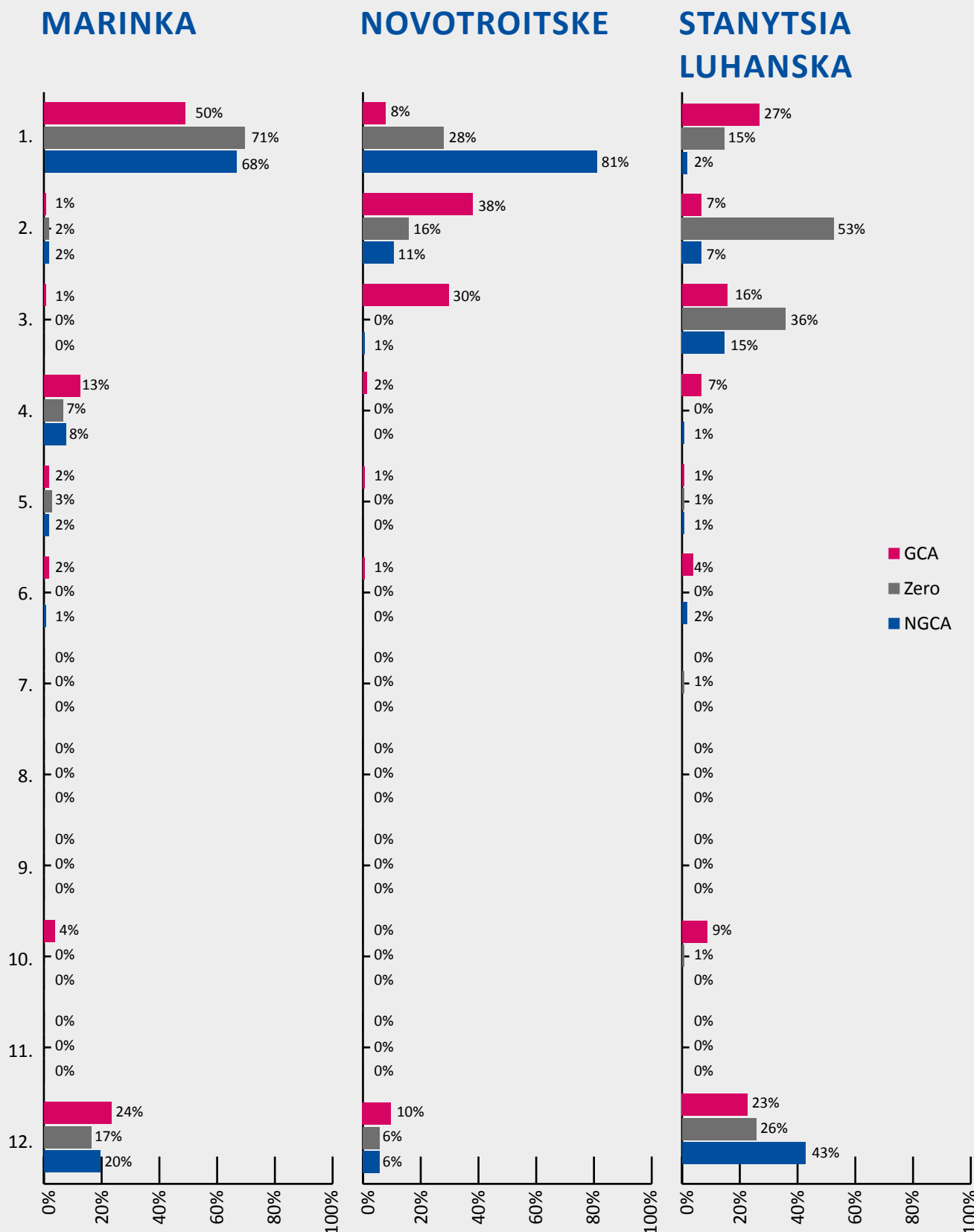



CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE⁶



⁶ Respondents could indicate several concerns

The share of respondents, who did not raise any concerns related to the crossing process, were increased by 13 percentage points in comparison to 2018 (22.7%) to 2019 (36%). The largest difference was observed at Stanytsia Luhanska (by 27 pp) and Maiorske (by 21 pp) EECPs. At the same time, such share at Novotroitske EECP decreased by 7 pp.





There was no significant difference in concerns by gender, however, the latter varied depending on the age of respondents. Overall, there were less people of older age who were not concerned about the crossing procedure (16%) than among respondents aged 18-34 (28%). Even though respondents in each age category expressed concerns about long lines, poor condition of the road, surface or bridge and the need to travel for a long distance on foot, the share of those over 60 years old was higher by 13 pp. in average.

Long lines remained a major concern at all EECs throughout the whole survey period. However, the share of respondents who mentioned this issue as their concern was volatile and fluctuated within a range of 24% (from 50% in October to 74% in August). The fluctuations were different at each EEC, influenced by a multitude of factors such as the number of crossings at the particular EEC, technical issues, weather conditions, number of operating staff, etc.

Poor condition of the road (or the bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska EEC) was very commonly cited as a concern at all EECs except Maiorske. However, the share of respondents concerned about it decreased by the end of the year. The sharpest decrease was at Stanytsia Luhanska as the transportation provided by Luhansk Oblast administration, UNHCR and NGO Partner Proliska partially solved the problem. The reconstruction of the bridge and the road at the EEC alleviated it almost entirely: only 3% of respondents at Stanytsia Luhanska mentioned the condition of the road or a bridge as a concern in December.

The number of respondents who did not raise any concerns fluctuated in a range of 32 percentage points during 2019 (from 12 % to 44 %). The share of such respondents demonstrated a tendency to increase by the end of the year at all EECs. The share of such respondents significantly varied depending on the EEC and the month of the survey, however, Maiorske EEC (54%) remained the least problematic through the year.

Respondents did not report any concerns about sex- and gender-based violence to R2P monitors throughout the year. 25 respondents mentioned abuse of power among their concerns. Most of them were surveyed at Marinka (11) and Stanytsia Luhanska (9). These respondents expressed concerns about aggressive and rude behaviour, prejudice, verbal abuse and excessive inspections (of young men, in particular). People often feel intimidated about articulating such complaints, so the level of such concern is most likely understated. R2P monitors often observed arguments between civilians and the EEC staff, however, they are usually being solved quickly, so people are not willing to complain. For instance, a male traveller refused to answer SBGS representative's questions at Maiorske EEC. A quarrel started, and then grew into a fight. Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI) provided medical aid to the man. The police whereas called, and an internal investigation was conducted. In another incident, the conflict occurred between travellers, and a bus driver and a conductor. The driver and the conductor behaved aggressively and insulted people in the line. Those workers were fired after R2P filed a complaint to the transport company management.

WAITING CONDITIONS

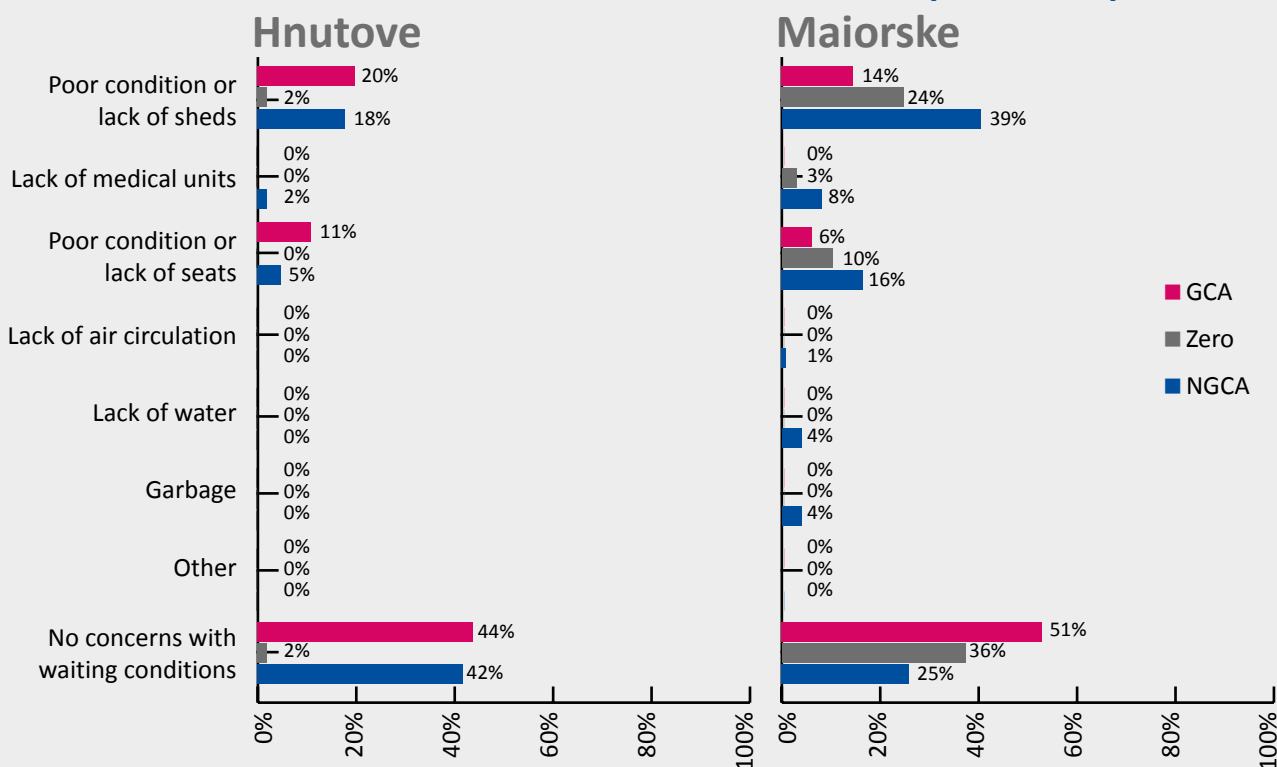
The share of respondents who had no concerns about waiting conditions increased in the second half of 2019 (from 36% to 44%) as a result of various improvements made at EECPs. The seasonal decrease in the number of crossing also had a positive impact, reducing the level of concerns.

The most notable changes took place at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. For the first seven months of the year it had the highest share of concerned respondents: only 10% of civilians surveyed in this period had no concerns with waiting conditions. The situation at Stanytsia Luhanska is also linked to the fact that it is very much affected by it being a pedestrian-only EECP. Concerns about the condition or the lack of sheds and seats were quite common, which was caused by seasonal weather changes. It was especially acute in summer (June-August period) due to the increase of outside temperature. Thus, the number of people who were losing consciousness in queues at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP exceeded 80 persons per day.

In the period of August-December the share of respondents who did not have any concern about waiting conditions constituted 53%. Such a dramatic change resulted from the launch of the free bus provided by Luhansk Oblast administration, the free electric car operated by NGO Proliska, the reconstruction of the road and bridge.

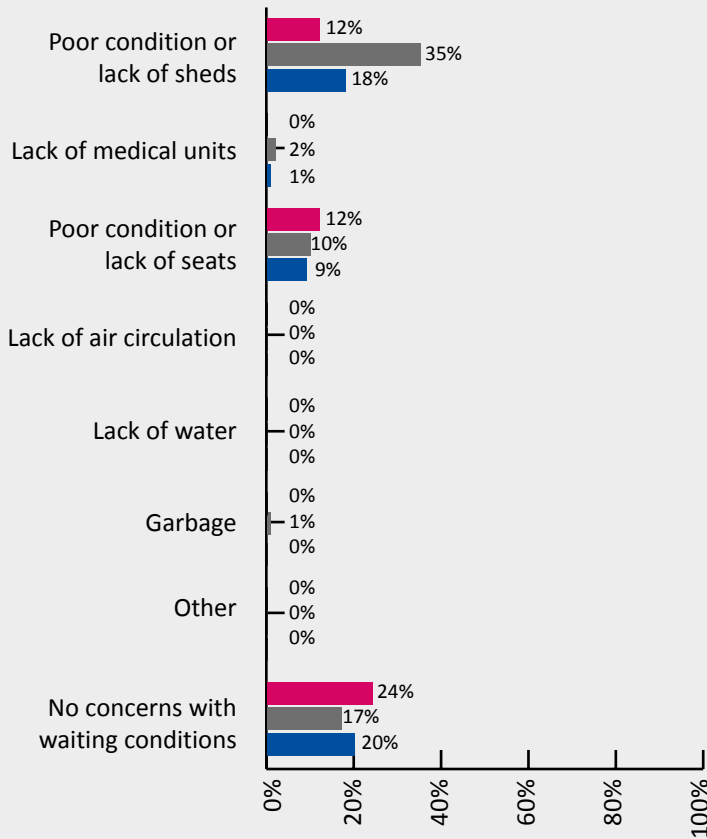
Concerns about toilets and their condition were also common among respondents at all EECPs in different periods. It was mostly caused by the insufficient maintenance. Throughout the year there were numerous complaints about new toilets that were installed within reconstruction of EECPs being closed and janitors taking down the signs in order to avoid work.

CONCERNS WITH WAITING CONDITIONS (BY EECP)

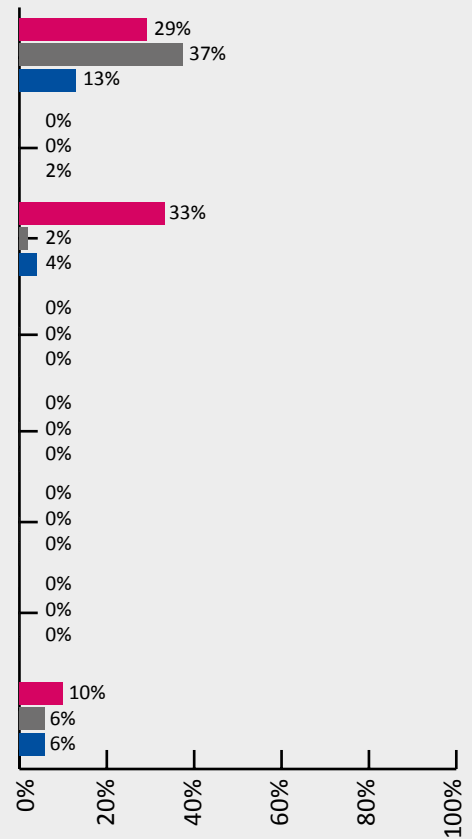


CONCERNS WITH WAITING CONDITIONS (BY EECF)

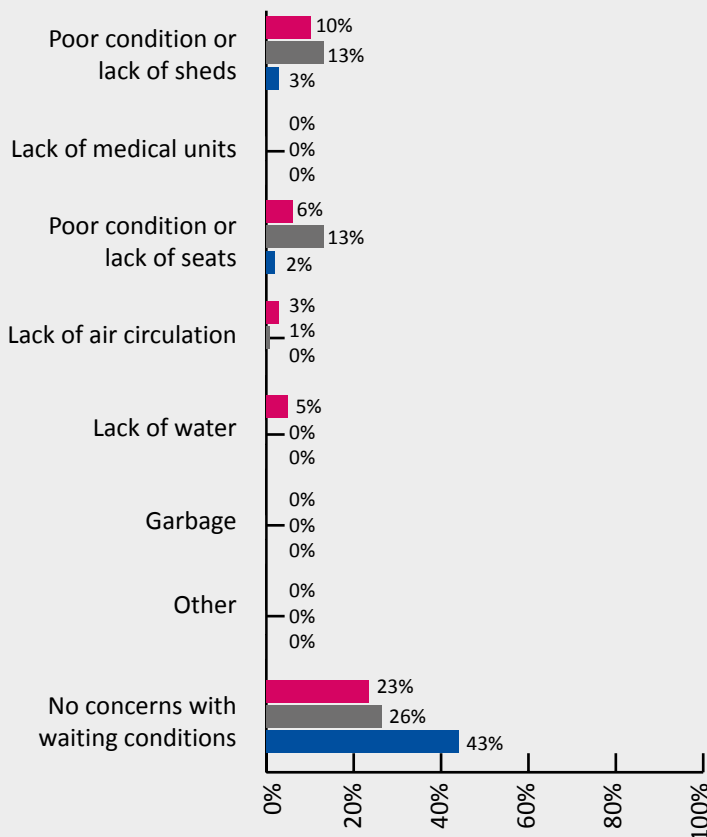
Marinka



Novotroitske



Stanytsia Luhanska

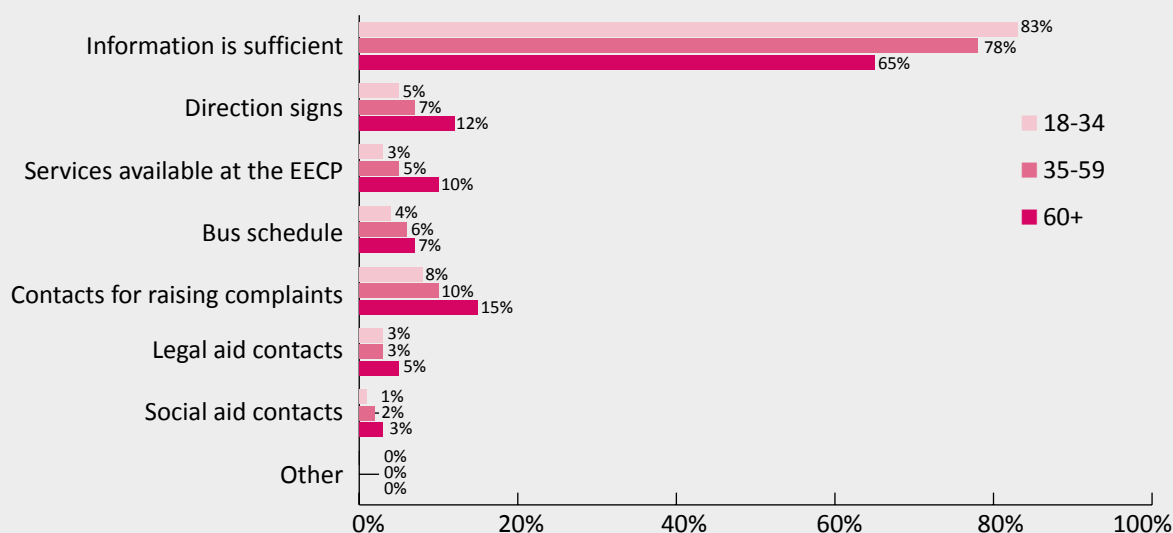


■ GCA
 ■ Zero
 ■ NGCA

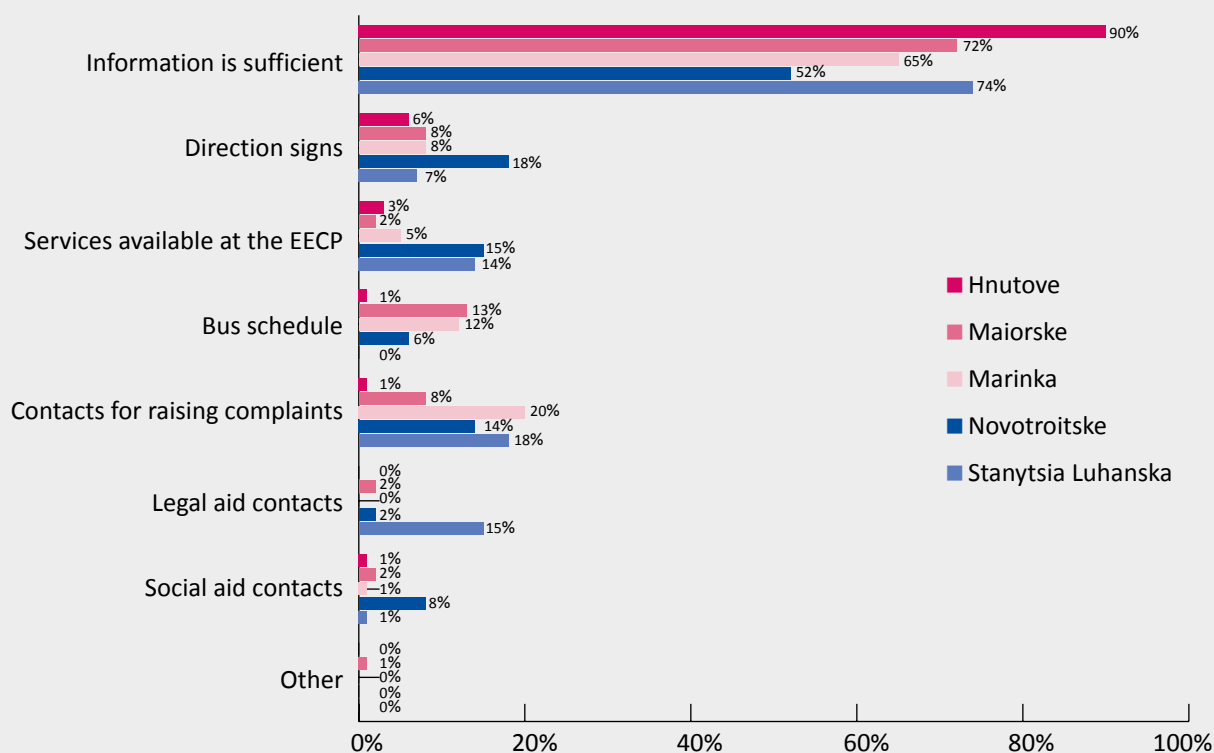
AWARENESS OF RESPONDENTS⁷

70% of all respondents do not feel they lack any information. However, it should be noted that 13% mentioned the lack or poor visibility of contacts of entities to address their complaints regarding the situation at the EECF (it can implicitly indicate that they might have such complaints). Some awareness improvements are observed after June, due to updated contact information.

LACK OF INFORMATION



LACK OF INFORMATION (BY EECF)



⁷ Respondents could indicate several issues

The highest share of respondents who did not feel the indicate a lack of informational support was at Hnutove EECP (92%). It is also important to know that the share of awareness varied based on the age of the respondents. Although the respondents over 60 years old tend to travel across the contact line more often, they also feel less informed than the respondents aged 18-34 (65% and 83% accordingly).

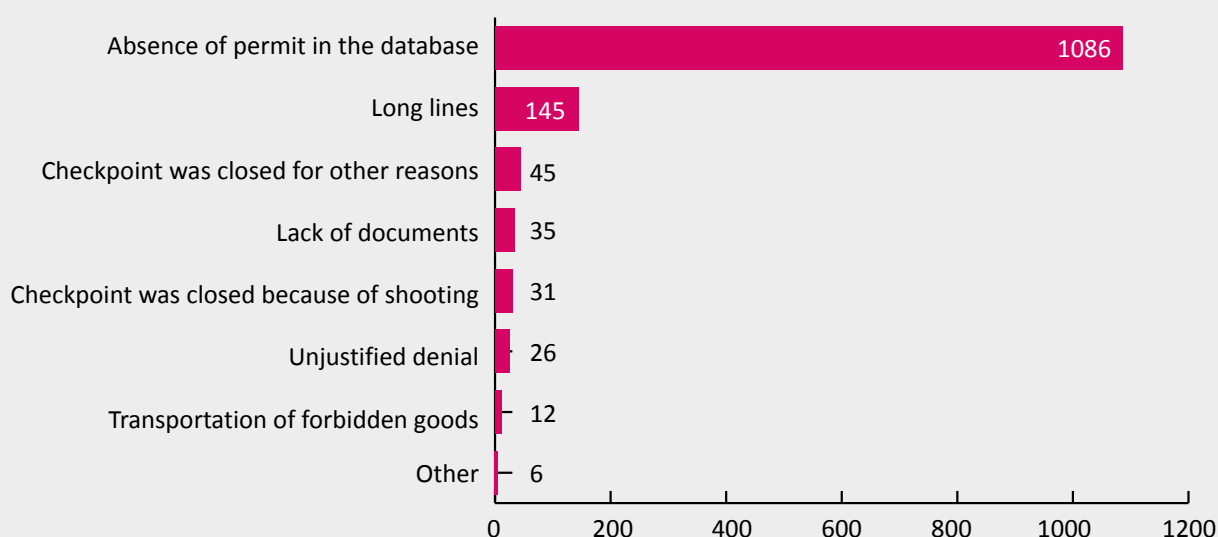
INABILITY TO CROSS


1,363 respondents (5% of the total number) informed R2P monitors that in 6-month period prior to the survey they had at least one incident when they were unable to cross the contact line and had to return. In more than a thousand cases (4%), respondents were not allowed to cross the contact line as their permit did not appear in the database. On March 28 the system of obtaining permits was upgraded, making the permits termless (old permits become termless after re-applying for prolongation), which supposes to have a positive impact on this share. However, monitors reported that the exchange of data between the Coordination Group and State Border Guard Service was conducted with delays (sometimes up to one month). The issues caused by such delays are more challenging at Novotroitske and Hnutove EECPs, as there are no CG representatives who could solve them.

By the end of the year, two important issues occurred that could potentially lead to an increase in the number of people denied crossing the contact line.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution №815 came into force on 28 November with a significant number of amendments included. Although some of the amendments facilitated the crossing procedure for children under the age of 14, the other ones complicated it for those over the age of 14, who did not obtain an internal passport yet. Cases of civilians with such children being denied access to GCA were observed since then. Later in December, a temporary solution was found: such children with their parents

REASONS OF INABILITY TO CROSS





or caregivers were directed to the national police staff at the EECF to file a document, confirming their intention to apply for a passport and explaining why the child did not obtain it timely. The State Migration Service certificate of application for passport was required for them to return to NGCA.

Since 11 December, people with debts for public utilities, land lease, alimonies, bank loans etc., were not allowed to cross the contact line to NGCA. Previously, they could cross due to a special SBGS interior regulation that was abolished on 11 December. It created the situation when NGCA residents were unable to return to their homes. By the end of the year the issue remained unsolved.

Despite the incidents of such individuals being denied crossing have already been reported by R2P monitors, the survey data did not demonstrate a tendency to increase by the end of the year.



ANNEX 1. OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the survey, R2P monitors conducted protection monitoring by observation at all five EECPs. The information below describes the situation as early January 2020. Some issues remained relevant even despite the reconstruction. Weather conditions continued to affect the crossing process. In winter months all EECPs lacked maintenance of the road surface, while in summer facilities of EECPs could not protect people in queues from heat. This can be hazardous for the life and health of people travelling across the contact line.

In 2019, R2P monitors reported 22 fatalities near the EECP on the GCA side. Four of them took place at Marinka EECP. Ten people died at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. Five fatalities happened at Maiorske EECP. Three men died at Novotroitske EECP. It is important to note that the preliminary cause of death in at least 12 of these cases was related to heart issues. Also, six people died in a road accident near Marinka EECP. According to the open sources, at least 16 individuals have died at checkpoints in NGCA, however this number is most likely underestimated and cannot be confirmed.

HNUTOVE EECF

	Amount	Condition	Location
Waiting area (modules)			
Sun/rain shed			
Air conditioning/ventilation			
Heaters			
Seats			
Beds/bed linen (in SES tents)			
Disposable utensils			
Potable water			
Sanitary water			
Garbage bins			
Toilets			
Soap/hand sanitizer			
Toilet paper			
Transport connection between the "0" and GCA checkpoints			
Wheelchairs			

- sufficient amount/proper condition/convenient location
- insufficient amount/poor condition or inappropriate maintenance/inconvenient location
- completely absent

There is still a need to extend the sheds and install more seats on GCA entrance from NGCA side.

Long distance to walk remains an issue at this EECF. Travellers have to cover over a kilometre on foot. By the end of 2019, Hnutove is the only EECF with this issue.














































The EECF lacks hygienic products in toilets.




The bomb shelter from the NGCA side was still under reconstruction by the end of the year.

There were some positive developments at the EECF: a waiting terminal and sheds over the pedestrian area were constructed from the GCA side. Additional booths and sheds were installed in the vehicle passport control area. Additional toilets, including those for people with low mobility, were installed in several places at the EECF.

Première Urgence Internationale provides medical assistance at the EECF on a schedule (8:00 – 15:30).

MAIORSKE EECP

	Amount	Condition	Location
Waiting area (modules)			
Sun/rain shed			
Air conditioning/ventilation			
Heaters			
Seats			
Beds/bed linen (in SES tents)			
Disposable utensils			
Potable water			
Sanitary water			
Garbage bins			
Toilets			
Soap/hand sanitizer			
Toilet paper			
Transport connection between the “0” and GCA checkpoints			
Wheelchairs			

-  - sufficient amount/proper condition/convenient location
-  - insufficient amount/poor condition or inappropriate maintenance/inconvenient location
-  - completely absent

The reconstruction was conducted at the EECP in 2019, which sufficiently improved the conditions: installation of waiting terminals, passport control booths, toilets, and sheds. An Oschadbank branch was build. In addition, a canteen and three shops were opened.

One of the two SES tents was dismantled due to low number of people using them. PUI tent was also dismantled, and the staff moved to a booth near the passport control area.














































Meanwhile, pedestrian area still lacks sheds, and there are still no seats near the Coordination Group representatives module.




The EECP lacks disposable dishes in the State Emergency tent, and hygienic products in toilets.

Bomb shelters are available at both sides of the EECP though there is no direction sign from the NGCA side. Moreover, some areas lack mine danger signs.

Première Urgence Internationale provides medical assistance at the EECP on a schedule (8:30 – 15:30).

MARINKA EECP

	Amount	Condition	Location
Waiting area (modules)			
Sun/rain shed			
Air conditioning/ventilation			
Heaters			
Seats			
Beds/bed linen (in SES tents)			
Disposable utensils			
Potable water			
Sanitary water			
Garbage bins			
Toilets			
Soap/hand sanitizer			
Toilet paper			
Transport connection between the “0” and GCA checkpoints			
Wheelchairs			

-  - sufficient amount/proper condition/convenient location
-  - insufficient amount/poor condition or inappropriate maintenance/inconvenient location
-  - completely absent














































Despite general satisfactory condition of the EECP, a number of issues remain there toilets have poor water supply water well malfunction. The EECP lacks disposable dishes in the State Emergency tent, and hygienic products in toilets.




People often complain about the lack of a direct route between the EECP and the town of Marinka.

EECP staff articulate insufficient capacity at the passport control.

Première Urgence Internationale provides medical assistance at the EECP on a schedule (8:00 – 15:00).

NOVOTROITSKE EECP

	Amount	Condition	Location
Waiting area (modules)			
Sun/rain shed			
Air conditioning/ventilation			
Heaters			
Seats			
Beds/bed linen (in SES tents)			
Disposable utensils			
Potable water			
Sanitary water			
Garbage bins			
Toilets			
Soap/hand sanitizer			
Toilet paper			
Transport connection between the “0” and GCA checkpoints			
Wheelchairs			

-  - sufficient amount/proper condition/convenient location
-  - insufficient amount/poor condition or inappropriate maintenance/inconvenient location
-  - completely absent

The infrastructure at Novotroitske EECP is in a rather good condition.

The mobile Oschadbank office was relocated from a remote place close to the waiting terminal, which improved access. At the same time, there are still no seats and sheds near it, and visitors complain about insufficient branch capacity. A bomb shelter was under construction.

The EECP lacks disposable dishes in the State Emergency tent, and hygienic products in toilets.

The bomb shelter and mine signs are in a satisfactory condition and conveniently located.

EECP staff articulate insufficient capacity at the passport control.

Première Urgence Internationale provides medical assistance at the EECP on a schedule (8:30 – 15:30).

STANYTSIA LUHANSKA EECF


	Amount	Condition	Location
Waiting area (modules)			
Sun/rain shed			
Air conditioning/ventilation			
Heaters			
Seats			
Beds/bed linen (in SES tents)			
Disposable utensils			
Potable water			
Sanitary water			
Garbage bins			
Toilets			
Soap/hand sanitizer			
Toilet paper			
Transport connection between the "0" and GCA checkpoints			
Wheelchairs			

- sufficient amount/proper condition/convenient location
- insufficient amount/poor condition or inappropriate maintenance/inconvenient location
- completely absent

Stanytsia Luhanska remains the only EECF with no vehicle traffic, as the renovated bridge is not wide enough. The reconstruction of the bridge has been a disputed issue for the parties of the conflict throughout the entire period of the EECF's operation. The vehicle line remains highly demanded. That is why the opening of Zolote EECF in Luhansk Oblast could alleviate the situation significantly.

After the reconstruction, the crossing conditions improved significantly. The smooth renovated bridge and road in combination with running transportation between zero checkpoint and the EECF (electric cars provided by the UNHCR and operated by NGO Proliska and a social bus provided by the Luhansk Oblast State Administration) made it far easier for people to travel across the contact line. Consequently, the demand for wheelchairs decreased, and acute shortage of them was eliminated.

A comfortable separate shed was constructed for travellers with carts. An additional Oschadbank branch and ATMs were installed.

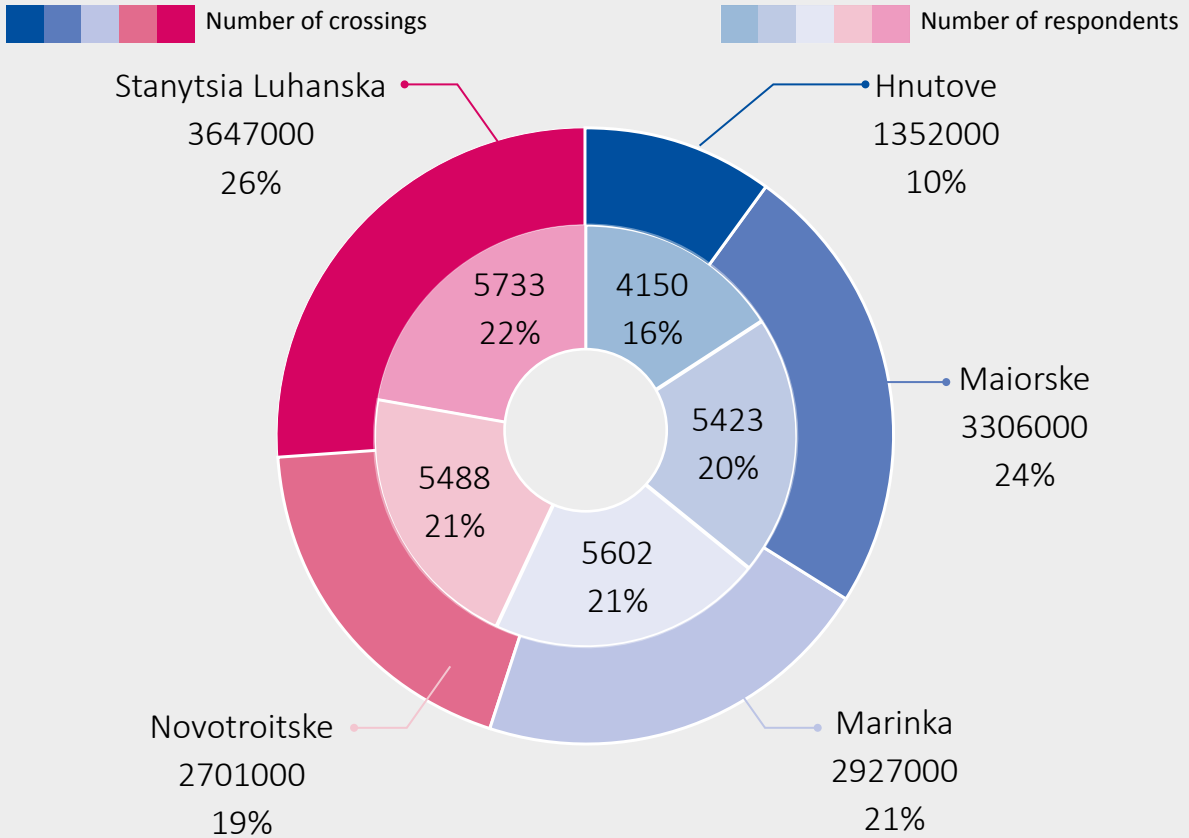


At the same time, the potable water tanks were still not installed on GCA side of the EECP, so it was possible to get water only in the toilets. Massive fainting still occurred during heat waves in summer (over 80 people per day). Moreover, EECP staff lack capacity during increased queues. The EECP lacks disposable dishes in the State Emergency tent, and hygienic products in toilets.

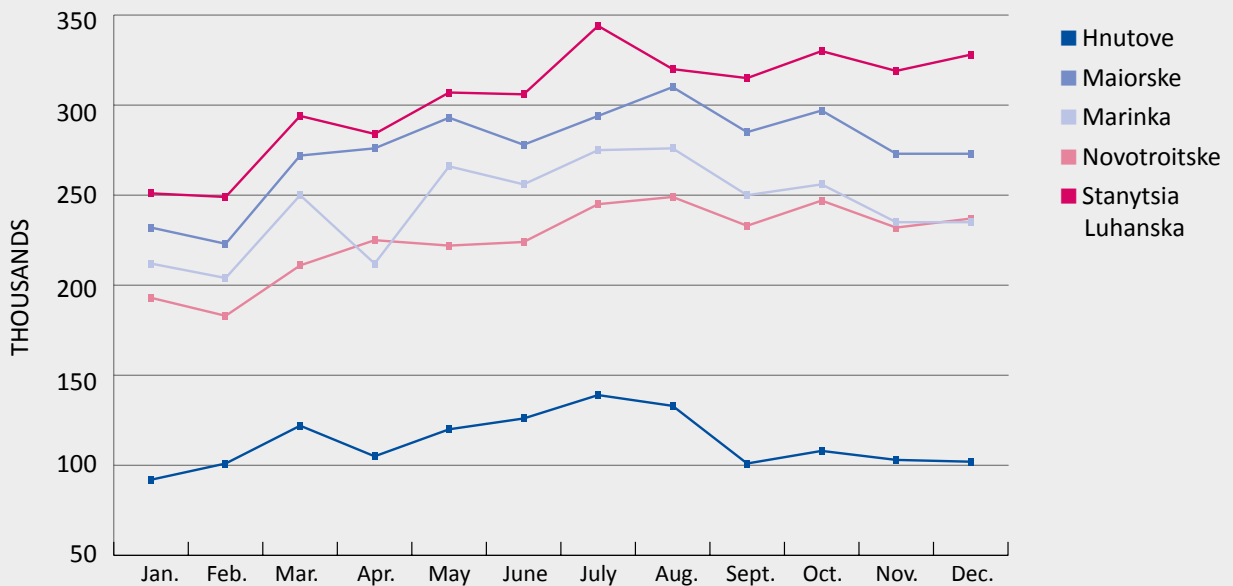
Medical assistance at the EECP is provided by the International Medical Aid (from 8:00 to 16:00), Ukrainian Red Cross Society (from 8:00 to 16:00), and a State Emergency Service paramedic (from 8:00 to 17:00).

ANNEX 2. EECp CROSSINGS DURING JANUARY-DECEMBER 2019⁸

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY EECp



NUMBER OF CROSSING BY EECp (IN THOUSANDS)



⁸ General statistics on crossings are available at the UNHCR dashboard visualizing data from the State Border Guard Service – <https://goo.gl/TZbU8c>

